

W. Barnes

from the Author

PART III.

OF

REMARKS

ON THE

DEFICIENCY OF GRAIN;

ON THE MEANS

OF

PRESENT RELIEF,

AND OF

FUTURE PLENTY.

BY

JOHN, LORD SHEFFIELD.

LONDON,

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Trade G. B. V 13

ERRATA.

Page

9. Omit the fourth, third, and second lines from the bottom; and insert
 " That 466,207 qrs. of wheat, and wheaten flour, were imported
 " in 1799; and 1,076,282 qrs. of wheat and flour in 1800, before
 " the 10th October."

35. Add under the total 950,867, " Wheat and flour imported into Scot-
 " land between the 1st January and October 1800, 112,309."

In the same page leave out the whole of the note, beginning with
 the word " besides," and insert,

Wheat imported into Great Britain between the 5th Jan.

1799, and the 4th Jan. 1800	- - - - -	grs. 445,047
Flour 63,481 reduced into quarters	- - - - -	21,160
Total	-	466,207



PART III.

ON

THE MEANS

OF

FUTURE PLENTY.

I HAVE already observed, that it will be an aggravating and painful reflection, if it can be shewn that we have fallen into our present distress through a want of due foresight and exertion; that the preventive remedy was within our grasp, and that although a defective harvest must sometimes happen, we might have guarded against any extreme progress of scarcity, such as that which now assails us—The remedy

must now be the work of time ; and before an attempt be made to point it out, it is necessary to examine what has heretofore been done, with the view of securing a sufficient growth of corn within the kingdom.

Very unequal, often extravagant, prices of corn, and frequent dearths, induced our ancestors to make laws for the encouragement of tillage ; they wisely promoted exportation, and from that moment, Cambden observes, agriculture received new life and vigour. Importation was prohibited, when corn did not exceed certain prices, by the 3d of Edward the Fourth. Exportation was allowed till the price of wheat would rise to 48s. the quarter, by the 15th of Charles the Second. After the price had risen to 48s. on paying certain duties, by the 22d of Charles the Second ; and the system of corn regulations was supposed to be completed, by giving a bounty on the exportation of corn, when the prices should not exceed those mentioned in the act (wheat 48s.), and the duties on export were

were repealed. This was done by the 1st of William and Mary.

The professed object of these laws was to promote tillage; and, previously to their existence, France and other countries boasted of supplying England with corn, and we were subject to great and frequent scarcities, and to prices from 15 to 20 per cent. higher than during the greatest part of a century after the passing the act which gives a bounty on exportation*.

The same, however, may be observed in respect to other parts of Europe, particularly in France†; and although there does not seem to have been

* Average price of wheat per quarter, Winchester measure, in England:

From 1646 to 1686.....£. 2..4..4

From 1686 to 1756..... 1.15..2

† The high price of corn in France, during the preceding centuries, is said to have been generally occasioned by intestine troubles. There was no real deficiency of crop in that country arising from a bad harvest in the seventeenth century, except in 1662; and from 1664 the price lowered, and

been any steady system or semblance of intelligence in the corn regulations, and laws of France and of Spain, before the year 1752, even the transport

and rose again in 1693, 1699, and 1709, in consequence of bad seasons. In the year 1754, the French began to adopt some good principles in respect to the corn trade. An edict, in September of that year, permits the circulation of corn in France, and the export from some ports in Languedoc. In the year 1695, a work detailing good maxims on that subject had been published, and also a memoir in 1739, another in 1748, and several other publications, which however did not succeed in removing the prejudices against the exportation of corn; but since the issuing of the edict just mentioned, this subject has been discussed by respectable writers, and those who will not be entertained by discussions of the general question, may at least be much amused by the wit and pleasantry of *Dialogues sur le Commerce de Bleds*, written by the Abbé Galliani in 1770, which work produced several answers. In the same year Turgot published *Lettres sur les Grains*; and in 1775, Necker's work, *Sur le Legislation, et le Commerce des Grains*, was printed. In a work published by him nine years afterwards, intitled, *L'Administration des Finances de la France*, he acknowledges the imperfection of that part of the work where he recommended, with too much precision, precautions of detail to prevent too high a price of grain. He considers the freedom of exportation as a fundamental principle, but with a power of suspension on the part of government; he admits the danger of inattention and

transport of corn, from one province to another, was severely prohibited in the former country by ordinances, particularly in 1577 and in 1699, and

also and ignorance on their part, but denies any ground for suspicion of partiality ; he mentions that he was sometimes obliged, during his administration, to forbid the transport of grain from some of the provinces, and sometimes to send corn to others ; but he asserts the necessity of maintaining a free circulation in the interior of the kingdom. On the subject of monopoly, he observes, it is impossible to have a fixed law which could mark, in express terms, the distinction between a useful speculation and a hurtful monopoly. Several French writers have remarked, that manufactures of luxury have hurt commerce in France. Men and wealth were collected in great towns, at the expence of the country, which became a desert ; they remarked the folly of debasing the price of corn, with a view of rendering manufactures less dear than in other countries ; they consider agriculture as the most fruitful and best kind of commerce, the best basis of revenue, the original and best source of riches, though now seemingly thought only to interest the farmer and the peasant. They complain that the planting of vines is prohibited, and the culture of mulberry-trees recommended for the sake of a silk manufacture, the exportation of the produce of agriculture forbidden, and the rental of the kingdom reduced, to favour manufactures prejudicial to their best commerce. They observe, France produces all articles of the first necessity ; that they can purchase of strangers nothing but articles

also the export of corn of the growth of the kingdom, however plentiful the crop, without either general or particular licence. In the year 1752 the Marquis de la Ensenada allowed the transport of wheat, barley, rye, and maize, from one province to another in Spain. Mr. Turgot will be ever distinguished for having, in 1774, effected the same free circulation of grain in France. It is ably remarked by Mr. Townsend, in his Travels through Spain, that "the consequence was equally beneficial to both kingdoms. But, notwithstanding their experience in the article of grain, all the nations of Europe, even the most enlightened, have had contracted views; and by their impolitic restrictions, have done the greatest injury to agriculture, to manufactures, and to commerce. A sagacious writer on political œconomy

ticles of luxury. They acknowledge that traffick between nations is necessary, but through an extravagant refinement of commerce, there is a wish to prejudice their neighbours; and, for the sake of gaining a few hundred thousand pounds, by elegant manufactures, they have lost millions by neglecting the produce of the land, and, flattered by having such frippery manufactures, they fancy they enjoy a flourishing trade.

æconomy has well observed, that modern states appear seldom to think of more than one class of their subjects at a time, and generally of the wrong class; for, in prohibiting an export, they think only of the buyers at home, whereas they ought then to think of the sellers there; and in prohibiting an export, they think only of the seller at home, and forget the buyers, the very reverse of which ought to happen; because, when the private sagacity of the subject has taught him that he can make a gain in any sale, or a saving in any purchase, the state ought to facilitate his operations, which, in proportion to the extent of the concern, would produce a balance in favour of the country. It should always be remembered that the demand creates the produce."

—Colbert restricted the trade in corn with a view to cheapen provisions for the sake of manufactures: the bad policy of that measure has been deservedly reprobated; and it is now acknowledged by foreign writers, that in England, by encouraging the exportation of grain, the quantity has been increased, the price sunk, and markets nearly equalized.

Notwith-

Notwithstanding the forbidding circumstances I have represented as having existed on the Continent, it has been stated from good authority *, that the price of wheat in France, and in Europe, has been, on an average of eighty years following the period in question, viz. 1688, little more than 33s. per quarter†; and that on an average of the preceding eighty years, it was something more than 38s. per quarter. It appears, therefore, that the markets of Europe have been better supplied, and at lower rates, during the greater part of the eighteenth, than during the preceding centuries.

Our corn laws, although they may not have had all the effect that some impute to them, seem

* Chalotais and Smith's Corn Tracts.

† The moderate price of wheat, under the successors of Constantine, was nearly the same, viz. 32s. the English quarter. We learn from Cicero, that the price of corn in Sicily was, during the prætorship of Sacerdos, five denarii the modium, or 3*l.* 17*s.* 9½*d.* per English quarter; and during that of Verres, which immediately succeeded, only two sesterces, or 4½*d.* per quarter. It is difficult to credit this variation of price; but if there be no mistake, it is rather a proof of the bad state of tillage in ancient times, as well as of political regulation.

seem to be well imagined, and are intended to obviate the apprehensions of the farmer, that the home demand might not secure a price adequate to his expences, if the growth should exceed the consumption. A bounty *, therefore, is given to enable him to send the surplus to a foreign market, and importation is prohibited by a high duty when corn is cheap. The farmer otherwise would only provide for an ordinary crop, and would not take into his calculation the deficiency

* Objections have been made to granting or continuing this bounty. The Tracts on Corn published by Mr. Smith, first printed in 1758, are equal in authority, and I think in good sense, to any thing printed on this subject. They state, that above a million and a half have been saved annually in consequence of that bounty, besides the money which had been brought into the country for corn exported, and which, on an average of 19 years, from 1746 to 1765, produced a net annual profit of 651,000*l*. I may here notice the great levity of some mercantile and other theorists, who, with ignorant facility, pronounce, *that as we cannot raise corn for our subsistence, we should depend on manufactures, and take corn in return from foreign countries.* They consider the corn trade as subservient to all others, and to bear scarce any proportion to the manufactures. It is not easy to conceive a greater want of knowledge, independent of the uncertainty

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ciency that might arise from a bad season; and thus tillage is essentially encouraged. At the same time the consumer is secured as far as may be against a dearth, by shutting the ports, in respect to exportation, when the price denotes a scarcity by its rising beyond a certain point, and by opening the ports for a considerable and certain period, to encourage the importation of grain when it is scarce and high priced.*

But our later politicians lost sight of the good policy of those laws, and endeavoured to make them subservient to popular notions, and to the purpose of reducing the price below that which would

certainly and mischief of depending on other countries. Corn, considered in its full extent, is by far the most considerable manufacture and trade of this country, and the greatest proportion of the land and of the people is employed in it. It may be added, that corn is a bulky commodity, and that, when we had an export, it employed much more of our shipping than any other branch of trade; and as the bounty was wisely confined to corn carried in British ships, it acted also as a bounty in favour of an increase of shipping and of mariners, and of all the various artificers and persons employed.

would encourage the growth of grain. In consequence of importation, through the too early opening of the ports, the average price of wheat for 24 years, viz. from 1771 to 1795, was 5s. 8d. per bushel; the average price even in 1798 and part of 1799, was only 6s. 3d.: when we consider the decrease of the value of money, and the increase of expence, that circumstance alone, without the other great causes, might account for the decline of tillage.

When the corn laws were under consideration in 1791, my opinion * respecting them was offered to the Public. The present difficulties were then foretold, and that they must often recur; indeed it seemed demonstrable.

During a course of years the corn laws appeared to answer the intended purpose; therefore the advocates for that system may wish to ascertain whether they are applicable to our present situation, and whether they can be extended to advantage:

* Observations on the Corn Bill depending in Parliament, published in 1791.

advantage : at all events, the principles of them must be preserved, and the importation price should be raised at least to what it was above a century ago, and on some grain much higher, particularly oats. In our artificial state, highly taxed and tithed, we can hardly admit of ports constantly open for import ; and as the other corn countries of Europe will generally enjoy abundant crops the same year that we do, and consequently the prices will be generally low, the surplus of British corn raised at great expence must have a bounty to enable that surplus to meet at market the corn of other countries raised at a much cheaper rate : but I am convinced, if it were possible to modify our corn laws to a state of the highest perfection, they could not reach our present case ; they would not be adequate as a preservative even from distress such as the present : we are menaced by difficulties far beyond what we have yet encountered, if we may judge from the increased gradation, the last scarcity having always greatly surpassed the preceding. The experience we have had of the want of grain at different periods not remote from

from each other, shew that we can no longer depend on our corn laws alone, and that some new and great exertion is necessary.

It has been already observed, that this country, which, within the last fifty years, had a highly-valuable export trade in corn *, is become in an alarming degree dependent on foreign states for its subsistence, and now pays to other countries, on an average, for grain, a much larger sum than she formerly received from them, and which probably, for this year, will not fall short of seven millions sterling.

On an average of years, viz. 1748 to 1768, both years inclusive, the annual exportation of grain was,

Wheat.	Barley.	Malt.	Oats.	Oatmeal.	Rye.
Qrs.	Qrs.	Qrs.	Qrs.	Qrs.	Qrs.
313,288	48,658	203,919	17,233	2,494	39,057

The

* The greatest exportation during the century was in 1750, viz.

Wheat.	Barley.	Malt.	Oats.	Oatmeal.	Rye.
Qrs.	Qrs.	Qrs.	Qrs.	Qrs.	Qrs.
947,602	224,500	330,754	10,554	4,283	99,049

The annual average value of which at that period was,

	s.	d.	£.	s.	d.
Wheat	313,288	at 31	8	496,039	6 8
Barley	48,658		18 3	44,400	8 6
Malt	203,919		12 0	122,351	8 0
Oats	17,233		16 0	13,786	8 0
Oatmeal	2,494		27 4	3,408	9 4
Rye	30,057		21 1	41,172	11 9
				721,158	12 3

Average importation of the last twenty years, from 1781 to the 10th of October 1800, both inclusive,

Wheat and Flour.	Barley.	Oats.	Rye.	Pears.	Beans.	Rice.
Qrs.	Qrs.	Qrs.	Qrs.	Qrs.	Qrs.	Cwt.
334,587	62,094	498,425	34,447	12,074	23,487	161,751

The

The annual average value of which,

	£.	s.	d.
Wheat.....	2	14	3
Barley.....	1	8	10
Oats	1	0	2
Rye.....	1	16	8
Peas	1	14	9
Beans	1	14	9

Average exportation for the last twenty years, viz. from 1781 to 1801 of October 1800, both inclusive.

Wheat and Flour.	Barley.	Oats.	Oatmeal.	Rye.	Peas.	Beans.	Malt.	Rice.
Qrs.	Qrs.	Qrs.	Bolls *.	Qrs.	Qrs.	Qrs.	Qrs.	Cwt.
50,965	29,456	12,256	2,789	6,488	4,189	9,362	50,715	91,519

* A boll 140 lb.

The

The rapid progress of that greatly-increasing evil, a dependence on other countries for subsistence, strongly appears from the average importations of the last fifteen years, viz.

	Wheat.	WheatFlour.	Barley.	Oats.	Oatmeal.	Rye.	Rye Meal.	Peas.	Beans.
	Qrs.	Cwts.	Qrs.	Qrs.	Bolls*.	Qrs.	Cwt.	Qrs.	Qrs.
Average of five Years, ending 1790	107,978	35,093	31,883	484,657	56,944	9,443		1,799	24,857
ditto 1795	298,583	87,630	94,693	734,945	94,471	32,195	7,519	17,193	37,393
ditto 1800	617,935	120,800	60,855	584,765	48,914	67,029	6,047	19,746	16,706

* A boll 140 lb.

There is a decrease on the average importation of oats for the last five years, in consequence of the export of that article from Ireland and the Baltic having been prohibited during an essential part of that period. We did not regularly import any

any considerable quantity of oats or oatmeal previous to 1763, but the importation latterly has been still greater in proportion than that of wheat, viz. from 600,000 to upwards of a million of quarters annually, including oatmeal.

The following average exportations from Great Britain, for the same fifteen years, mark how the export of British corn has declined. The greater part of that small exportation was sent to our own dependencies, as appears more particularly in the Tables in the Appendix, which give an account of grain exported, distinguishing the ports from whence, and the countries to which, exported.

	Wheat.	Wheaten Flour.	Barley.	Oats.	Oatmeal.	Rye.	Peas.	Beans.	Malt.
Average of five Years,	Qrs.	Cwt.	Qrs.	Qrs.	Qrs.	Qrs.	Qrs.	Qrs.	Qrs.
ending 1790	64,602	42,557	67,694	14,948	0 85	17,370	6,764	10,794	102,611
ditto 1795	58,415	25,547	6,863	12,031	731	3,496	3,719	7,702	14,449
ditto 1800	3,778	18,900	7,029	11,232	990	24	2,093	8,063	8,550

The

The last fifteen years include two remarkably bad harvests, and so did the period from 1748 to 1768 ; and the years 1757 and 1767 were years of such scarcity that the Legislature thought it necessary to take extraordinary steps, and the Country seemed almost as much alarmed as in the years 1796 and 1800 *.

Average

* We learn from Smith's Tracts on Corn, that the misapprehensions and prejudices of the people, in the year 1757, were nearly the same, though not quite so extravagant as they have been lately. — The dearth of corn was imputed principally to the avarice of the farmers, and iniquity of the factors, merchants, millers, bakers, and dealers in corn ; but he proves that it arose chiefly, if not wholly, from the deficiency of the crops. He wrote in the year 1758 ; and the following description applies so nearly to our late crops, that I think the quotation may be interesting to the reader. After talking of the shortness of the crop in the year 1756, he says, " Supposing the crop of the last year 1757, to have been as good as the fine prospect in the field promised, which there is reason to doubt, much of it being lighter by two or three pounds in a bushel than in fine years, *from the blight or mildew brought on by the dry weather*, it would not be sufficient to reduce the price much or soon, as little or no old stock was left remaining, and of course a much larger quantity of this year's growth must be already consumed than is usual at this time of the year. To confirm the observations,

Average value of grain from Jan. 4, to Oct. 10, 1800.

	L.	s.	d.
Wheat.....	5	12	3
Barley.....	2	18	0
Oats	2	2	1
Oatmeal.....	3	13	1
Rye.....	3	18	0
Peas.....	3	7	4
Beans	3	9	6

The average price of wheat in Scotland, 4*l.* 3*s.* 4*d.*

The highest price during the same period in England, viz. in July, 6*l.* 16*s.* 4*d.*

The variations, if we recur to former times, we shall find, that, in the year 1693, wheat rose from 2*l.* 6*s.* to 3*l.* 7*s.* per quarter; and was not much under that price, except in 1695, when it was 2*l.* 13*s.*, till 1700, when it came down to 40*s.* In 1709, wheat rose from 2*l.* 1*s.* 6*d.* to 3*l.* 18*s.* 6*d.* at which price within sixpence it continued the next year, and was not so low as 40*s.* till 1718. In 1740, wheat rose to 2*l.* 15*s.* from 1*l.* 17*s.* 6*d.*; and though the clamour was at that time as much against the farmers, &c. as it now is, and the harvest of 1741 was good both as to quantity and quality, yet wheat was at 2*l.* 7*s.* throughout that year; though, in 1742, it came down to 1*l.* 12*s.* and after that continued declining, and was cheap, to 1745. In 1757, corn being considered excessively dear, and great disturbance arising, Parliament stopped the distillery, prohibited the exportation for a year, and for the first time allowed importation duty-free for a time certain, and in neutral ships; also prohibited the ex-
portation

The foregoing averages and statements shew the increase, and in some degree the extent of our dependence in respect to the first of necessities, bread corn; and after deducting the exports from the imports, the balance proves, that, on an average of years, this country, which formerly exported almost as much as it now on an average imports, does not grow sufficient for its own consumption, and pays the enormous sums above stated to foreigners for grain. But we do not see the whole extent of the evil, if we merely consider the average importations. The difficulty would be less, if we had only a regular yearly quantity to provide: for example, the average importation of the last ten years, viz. Wheat 492,992 qrs.—Barley 77,774 qrs.—Oats 682,470 qrs. (the two last being also the food of a great proportion of the people, should not be omitted;) but the unequal quantity that is wanted, renders

portation of grain, flour, beef, pork, &c. from the American colonies, except to Great Britain and Ireland." The price of wheat in London, in June 1757, was from 3*l.* 7*s.* to 3*l.* 12*s.* per quarter.

renders the embarrassment greater. We sometimes require nearly three times the average quantity, and we are often in need of an extraordinary supply, when the crop is not abundant in the North of Europe, from whence alone we ever receive any considerable quantity of grain, or perhaps where it is nearly as deficient as our own; but, unfortunately, we have been for some time habituated to so large an importation of wheat, that it no longer alarms us as it ought to do *.

It has been shewn, that the importations of grain are become immense, and that they may be considered as constant and increasing. We see that an average crop is not equal to our consumption. It is therefore not necessary for our present purpose to dispute as to the degree of an increased extraordinary consumption, nor in respect to the number of people, nor to ascertain the

* The above average, viz. 492,942 quarters of wheat, is, however, not much less than double the quantity the Emperor Justinian could exact from the fertile province of Egypt for the use of Constantinople; namely, eight million of Roman modii, or 260,000 quarters of wheat.

the exact growth of each kind of grain in the island. It is, however, to be wished, that we had such information; but the result can only be the fact we already too well know, from the excess of imports over exports, that *the country does not produce sufficient corn for the inhabitants.*

If we yield to the evil, and our wants should increase each time of scarcity in the proportion they have done during the last thirty or forty years, the surplus corn of all the countries with which we trade would not suffice, and all the treasure of the kingdom would not be sufficient for the purchase of it; such surplusses are by no means so great as many are disposed to believe. Writers, even not wholly void of reputation, have asserted, that a good crop was sufficient for three years—and some have said, even for five years consumption. On the other hand, it has been observed by Smith in his *Corn Tracts*, “that we had ten of as good crops as ever were known in succession, from 1741 to 1751; and that the common

common opinion was, we had sixteen." He asks, where was this great quantity of corn to be seen in 1751? Exportation could not account for so great a redundancy, as there must have been if such had been the case. Sir James Stewart, in a work conveying great knowledge, intitled *Principles of Political Economy*, on which he well bestowed twenty years, seems to be of opinion, that our best crop does not produce a full supply for fifteen months, in that abundance with which we feed ourselves in a year of plenty. Exportation proves, that the best crop falls considerably short of that quantity. Sir James Stewart further expresses his belief, that there never was a year of such scarcity as that the lands of England did not produce greatly above six months subsistence; and he concurs in the opinion that I have offered, that, were six months of the most slender subsistence to fail us, all Europe together might not be able to supply a quantity sufficient to prevent the greatest desolation by famine. He adds, that England is too extensive to be fed from abroad, like Holland, even although it should

should be admitted that a sufficient quantity of food might be found in other countries for its subsistence.

The public expectation has been much deceived in respect to supplies from the American States. The Table in the Appendix shews the importation from thence into Great Britain from 1783 (the first date of their independent trade) to the present time. That the greatest quantity * of wheat received from thence was in the year

	<i>Qrs.</i>
1791.....	101,340
1796.....	50,641
1800.....	91,202

and previously to independence, the average export of wheat and flour to Europe and the Mediterranean, from all North America, including the remaining colonies, for three years ending

1771,

* The flour is reduced into quarters, and added to the grain.

1771, choosing a medium time between the two wars, amounted only to 175,502 qrs.; the remainder of the wheat and flour exported from America went to the British and foreign West Indies, where they must continue to go unless they are supplied from Europe.

It was stated in evidence to the Corn Committee of the House of Commons, the latter end of the year 1795, that between the 1st October 1793 and 30th September 1794, 425,364 qrs. of wheat in grain and flour, were exported from the American States into all countries. This was understood to be an unusual quantity*. It has been already shewn, that the high price of this year has brought to us even the sweepings of all the granaries of the North of Europe.

We should observe how our wants have increased on each scarcity, in a degree by no means

x

to

* When I have had an opportunity of examining American accounts of exports, I have usually found them much exaggerated.

to be accounted for by the difference of population, and that the exports in former times exceeded the imports even in the years of scarcity.

Years.	Imported.	Exported.
	Qrs.	Qrs.
1697	400	14,698
1698	845	6,857
1699	486	557
1709	1,552	69,437
1710	400	14,426
1728	74,574	3,817
1757	130,343	11,226
1758	19,039	10,737
1768	272,307	7,433
1774	269,235	15,171
1775	544,640	28,348
1783	589,781	18,115
1796	889,003	1,106
1800	1,076,281	

to 10th October.

But if we could obtain the quantity we may want, shall we be able to continue to pay the enormous sums that must in that event continue to be transferred from Great Britain to other countries

countries for corn? It has been said, and with some appearance of reason, that the drain of money in 1796 for the purchase of foreign corn *, turned the balance of trade against us, and brought on the disgraceful pecuniary difficulties in 1797, when the Bank of England stopped payment in specie †. This year the importation of foreign corn will probably amount to nearly a third

* Aided, however, by subsidies and other remittances to foreign countries.

† Mr. Simeon Pope, in his evidence before a Committee of the House of Commons, in the year 1797, respecting the exportation of coin or bullion, imputes to the immense purchase of foreign corn, in a great degree, the scarcity of specie then so sensibly felt. He states, that two thirds of the great expence of importing grain had been drawn out of this country in specie; that the export of bullion began with the rise, and ceased with the fall of the price of corn. That the captains or owners of foreign corn ships returned in ballast. He observed, that more guineas were in circulation in the north of Europe than any of the current coins of those countries, and publicly acknowledged to have been brought from England for corn: he further added, it is generally computed that about eight millions of specie were brought here from France, Flanders, Holland, and Germany, in consequence of the French revolution; the greater part of which is gone for foreign corn, and with it quantities of our own.

third more than in 1796, and the prices have been not much less than a third higher, and exchange is still more unfavourable to us. Our gold is disappearing, and rapidly passing out of the country.

I cannot too strongly point the attention of those who have the power of obviating impending famine and bankruptcy, to the necessity of preventing, not merely the returns of our present distress, but of a situation much more calamitous. We are at this moment in danger of being entirely cut off in respect to all supply of corn from abroad, (except, perhaps, three or four days consumption that may be brought from America,) not only by the hostility or perverseness of the northern powers, but in consequence of deficient crops on the Continent, and just apprehensions that the very extraordinary prices we give, may drain those countries and produce a famine there. I wish to impress, that it is a matter of the first necessity to provide a sure supply of bread, consequently that we should not depend on

on other countries for grain ; that an increasing population, which is deemed a great blessing, will become the greatest of curses, unless we can feed the people; that we must no longer rely on our corn laws, nor risk the delay of trifling palliatives—every thing of the kind will be found inefficient, and procrastination may prove ruinous.

It will occur to those who have duly considered the subject, that the preservation from the return of the present distress, which, within a few years, we have too often experienced, and the means of future plenty, must be obtained through the cultivation of our wastes, including the forest lands ; for the latter cannot be considered in any other light than as waste when the people want bread, and when the great object of feeding them is in question. It will hardly be necessary to detain the reader with further arguments in respect to the necessity of such a measure, even if a preventive from famine and bankruptcy were not in question ; it is an object of the greatest consequence

consequence to recover the best trade we can have, to supply part of our present feverish commerce, which must be considered as precarious, having arisen from the suspension of manufactures and trade in countries now in a worse state than our own. Perhaps there never was so general a cry; it may be called a demand from every part of the island in favour of the cultivation of the waste lands: the means are certain, and perfectly practicable, against which no material or rational objection has been urged, nor probably ever will,

If, after the admonition we have received by the frequent sufferings of the poor, we continue to neglect the gifts of Providence, the memory of those in whose hands the power of prevention now is, must be held in execration, not only by the present, but by succeeding generations. The waste lands will become the greatest treasure, if we exert common sense in the use of them. We are surprised when we reflect on their extent; and perhaps no circumstance lowers the character

ter of the people of this island, in respect to a rational and sound political œconomy, more than the extent and state of the uncultivated lands. We seem to indulge the idea, that England is a highly-improved country ; not one fourth of it is, however, cultivated as it should be ; and no civilized country has so large a proportion of waste lands. It has been said, that they are more in extent than all the Dutch united provinces, and more cultivable, and of a better nature, than the greater part of those provinces were. The waste lands are infinitely more valuable than any of our conquests, or any that we possibly can make, with the great advantage of not entailing on us any increased expence of protection, they may be rendered the best extension of our population and of our revenue ; it may be considered as the best kind of colonization, without any of the disadvantages of establishing settlements abroad *. The Address to the Board of

* The system of colonizing, except West India Islands, always appeared to me to be highly impolitic: West India colonies may be protected and maintained by our fleet

of Agriculture from the president Sir John Sinclair communicates much information respecting the improvement and cultivation of the waste lands of these kingdoms ; in that Address, and in three Reports from the Select Committee of the House of Commons on waste and uninclosed lands, printed in the years 1795, 1797, and 1800, may be found a great deal of useful matter, ably collected, and well stated; and the last Report brings forward much essential information on the subject of Bills of Inclosure. The Address and Reports seem to contain every thing that is necessary for a due understanding of these matters.

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fleet; they furnish what we cannot produce in this island; they never can produce nor manufacture the same articles as we do, nor is it necessary for them that they should, being more profitably employed; consequently they will be supplied from hence. I am sorry East India settlements are become necessary, and that I must also except them: Nova Scotia is the only other exception I shall make, for the sake of its harbours. From Halifax we could maintain our Newfoundland fishery, and, by cruizing between that port and the Bahamas, protect our trade when necessary. The forming the upper inland colony in Canada, cannot be defended by any thing like argument.

It is as nearly ascertained as can be necessary for our purpose, that the cultivated lands of Great Britain are upwards of fifty-one millions of acres, and the uncultivated upwards of twenty-two millions : a great proportion, however, of those said to be cultivated, are by no means worthy of that description ; but, on the whole, the cultivated, half cultivated, and uncultivated lands of these kingdoms hold out the best prospect of future national wealth and prosperity.

I should think it highly unbecoming the Legislature to enter into calculations, of what proportion of these waste lands it is necessary to cultivate, to produce the quantity of grain we now import from abroad ; we should aim at cultivating almost every yard of it, either for tillage, pasture, meadow, or the growth of wood. If we raise (which we certainly may) as much as we can want in the year of the worst harvest, we shall be in other years restored to our lost and most valuable exportation trade in corn. To leave in a state of waste or commonage (which I think

think nearly as bad) an acre of land that is capable of improvement, would be perfectly unwise.

The Address states, that there is a million of acres incapable of improvement: there may be that quantity of absolute rock, or mountain of stone; but, if I may judge from some lands I have seen under cultivation within a few months, and particularly on the black mountains between Yorkshire and Lancashire, there is no part of the surface of the island, except absolute rock, or the very tops of the highest mountains, that is not capable of improvement. It is not now necessary to discuss how far it may answer, except from local circumstances; but the soil I allude to was the highest ground, and such as I should have supposed of the most incorrigible nature, yet a part of it, not long inclosed, produced a sweet short grass, and was improved by lime brought upwards of thirty miles*; but if, in other situations, it might not answer the expence of carrying lime to so great a distance, it is known

* The greatest part of the way by water.

known that some woods, particularly birch and larch, will grow on any soil that is not absolutely ruined by wet; and there is scarce any land that may not be drained, though it must be acknowledged, in many instances, it might require a larger sum of money than would purchase dry land.

A great part of this immense quantity of waste is supposed fit for upland pasture; another part is capable of being converted into meadow; and a much larger proportion is fit to be planted;* and there can be little doubt, that at least one seventh of the whole, or upwards of three millions of acres, may be fit for tillage. If we suppose one fourth of the three millions of acres to produce only 16 bushels of wheat per acre, the amount will be 1,500,000 qrs. about one fourth more than we probably shall have imported even in 1800, and in value, according to the present price of wheat, at 7*l.* 10*s.* per quarter, would be 11,250,000*l.*; another fourth, or 750,000 acres, at

* We should never forget the large sums we pay to foreigners for several kinds of timber, which might be raised on our neglected lands.

at four quarters per acre, would furnish 3,000,000 quarters of oats, present value 40s. per quarter, 6,000,000; another fourth might supply much more barley, peas, beans, &c. than we ever imported, and in value considerably more than the last article; and another fourth would remain for fallow, artificial grasses, turnips, and other crops. This is only meant as a rough statement, to shew, at a low computation, how great a supply of corn might be produced from our waste lands. A calculation made on a seventh part only, as already observed, without reckoning any thing for the effects of industry and exertion, which might extend the produce and profit infinitely beyond what is here stated.

It might not be difficult to write a folio on the necessity, and another on the practicability, of rendering the waste lands productive; but voluminous discussions are ill calculated to engage the attention of any considerable part of the community: indeed both the one and the other appear to me nearly self-evident propositions, and not to require further argument.

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We are astonished when we examine and find how great is the extent of the waste lands * or commons, in general only productive of a bad breed of subjects and of cattle, the existence of both being more hurtful than beneficial to the State. Those brought up on such wastes possess no principles but those of rapine, plunder, and theft; their industry is employed in depredations and encroachments; they find themselves in opposition to the law, and in disrepute; they feel that they have no pretension to character, and

* The General Review of the Agriculture of Westmoreland, has the advantage of preliminary observations by the Bishop of Llandaff. His Lordship is inclined to believe that three-fourths of the county is uncultivated; but that the whole of it is capable of improvement, and that the worst and most mountainous parts might be planted: he does not say that he is sure the larch would grow there, but he describes a soil in which I have seen them attain an immense size, and near the summits of the highest of the Alps; they are known to thrive in the cold and exposed country near Archangel. He expresses the wish of a true patriot, that whilst there is an acre of such waste improveable land in Great Britain, it may be hoped that, when the Legislature shall turn its attention to the subject, no inhabitant of the island will be driven by distress to seek a subsistence in Africa or America.

and they do not affect any ; they seldom thrive, because their subsistence is precarious, as they depend on other means rather than on regular industry : a great part of them are in a state more savage than is generally imagined, possessing neither any sentiment, nor even shew of religion *. Their instruction in morality does not go beyond the hint they receive from a game-keeper, that they will be sent to the house of correction if they are discovered in the act of destroying game. Their notion of the nature of property is, that they may take whatever they can without detection : luckily it happens they have no particular tendency wantonly to kill a fellow creature, and they learn partly from tradition, and partly from observation, that those who commit murder run the risk of being hanged.

It is notorious, that the poor is much more numerous, and the poor rates much higher, in proportion

* Many of the County Reports to the Board of Agriculture confirm this account, particularly from Brecknock, Radnor, Lincolnshire, Middlesex, &c.

proportion to the quantity of common in the parish ; and it appears to me doubtful, whether the encouraging them to build cottages, and inclose small pieces of land, does not do more harm than good. As far as my observation goes, it oftener impoverishes than assists them. If they can collect money enough to build a house, and inclose a piece of land, or even to purchase a cow, they will find it much cheaper to hire a cottage at 40s. or 3/. a year, and a piece of land, or even a small farm, than to build a house and fence, and make a piece of waste land productive. It perhaps may be said, that all this may be done by money, and time stolen from ordinary labour : this I know to be impossible to any extent ; and if an effort is made with that view, the family, not being entitled to parish relief, is half starved, thrown into a situation of desperate and degrading distress, and perhaps obliged to sell this ruinous speculation for a trifling sum. In many instances, small tenements occupy the husbandman, and withdraw him from pursuits much more beneficial to himself, to agriculture, and to the State—

State—He is diverted from going to daily labour, and I have generally observed that the families of those who are in the situation described, and endeavour to scrape together a subsistence by higgling, and such occupation, are more destitute, and in a much more miserable state, than those who live in cottages hired or provided for them. These observations apply to cottagers who have no property: it must be admitted that those who have some property, are generally independent of the parish, and do not deserve the bad reputation of their poorer neighbours. In respect to cattle, we should have none of a breed worse than is to be seen in any other country, if we had no commons or wastes, the slightest examination of the difference between the stock kept on any commons, and those to be found in the neighbouring enclosures, will remove all doubt on this point, and that the growth is stunted, and the animal almost starved, that is kept on commons*; and even where the right

* In Foote's Survey of Middlesex, it is asserted, that if a cottager purchases a cow in the spring, and keeps it on a common

right of common is limited, the stint is generally so large, that the rights are comparatively of little use. The difference between the size of cattle, sheep, &c. since inclosures took place, is decisive on this point; the weight of oxen, cows, calves, and sheep is considerably more than doubled, as appears from the accurate returns of Smithfield market.

The only person who can pretend to derive any advantage from these commons is the farmer of great overbearing stock and capital, who nevertheless would be more benefited by a twentieth part of the common or waste, when in-

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common during the best season of a year, and afterwards sells it at Michaelmas, that the difference of the price runs away with all the profit that could be got from milk, &c. It is also said, let one man have a right to do so for nothing, put a cow of any value upon the generality of commons any time in spring, and let another give a farmer 1s. 6d. per week for the keep of his cow in an inclosure, both being of the same value when turn'd out: if both are driven to market at Michaelmas, the difference of price will more than repay the expence of the keep, without making any allowance for the additional quantity of milk which the cow, kept in an inclosure, must yield,

closed and cultivated, than by the scrambling advantages he now derives from it.

The above observations are made in answer to those who argue in favour of commons or waste lands, because they are useful to the poor, and in the rearing of cattle; if the poor have rights, they will be entitled to their share on the inclosure. The land-owner or farmer will be restricted to his proportion in a manner highly beneficial to him; and the state will derive great advantages from a better population, from a better breed of cattle, and from a great increase of cultivated land, productive of corn and revenue: but the country must starve before this great improvement can take place, through the slow operation of separate acts of Parliament for inclosures. It is nearly a century since that mode of dividing common fields and bringing waste lands or commons into cultivation took place. The acts of inclosure have not been numerous till within these last fifty years; but no number of years would bring into cultivation the immense quantity

quantity of land which still remains not better than waste. It has been observed, that, according to the best calculations that have been made, there are upwards of twenty-two millions of acres uncultivated, and about fifty-one millions cultivated, in Great Britain; and about two millions eight hundred thousand acres of common field land and commons have been inclosed in England and Wales, by acts of Parliament during the century. As the expences are infinitely increased, and are increasing, the remainder would not, by the same means, be inclosed in many centuries, if ever.

The first step towards the great and most necessary work must be a general inclosure act; there is such an act in Scotland, which took place as early as 1695. The provident and sensible people of that country endeavoured to render it efficient; and therefore the law says, that a division should be procured at the instance of any one having interest; and the expence of obtaining that division, though instituted

tuted at the suit of one, is defrayed by the whole of the parties concerned in proportion to their respective shares. The law in question might not exactly suit this country, except in principle; but it would be easy to adapt it to our situation, to alter it where necessary, and to avoid whatever defects may have been found in it. Yet it has been declared, and with an air of authority, that a general inclosure act for England is not practicable; but it was so said by those who did not know enough of the country to discern how perfectly feasible it is: and that on this occasion it is absolutely necessary not to yield to trifling difficulties. Little prejudices and mistaken interests may raise some insignificant doubts; and it is impossible to invent any thing so absurd, that, amidst the variety of understandings in this land of freedom, it may not have its champion; however, we may expect that the general good sense of the country will prevail on this most interesting occasion.

Numbers have a direct interest in maintain-
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ing, cherishing, and defending abuses ; advocates may be found for any thing. There will be objections on the part of persons who derive great profit from all the little management and expences that take place in consequence of our present bad system, which discourages the very thing which we wish to promote, expences so great, that in many instances they prevent the most necessary of all improvements. Many of those who are most strenuous in favour of the cultivation of the wastes absolutely despond in respect to the success of this great measure, because so many belonging to the law, and so many clerks and others, are interested in an expenditure nearly amounting to a prohibition of inclosure acts, that it is supposed they will contrive means of counteracting it *. The Report
made

* It is truly disgraceful that the salaries of even the most respectable and considerable offices belonging to both Houses of Parliament, should be dependent on fees, which are exacted from those who are endeavouring to make improvements most beneficial to the country. And it is more remarkable, as there is the precedent of the Speaker, who has a salary, and no advantage from inclosures.

made last spring from the Select Committee of the House of Commons on Bills of Inclosure, has enumerated many instances of expence, abuse and bad management, which reproach the political œconomy of this kingdom. I must suppose there are few who dispute the necessity of cultivating the waste lands, or who will not agree that every difficulty and expence should be removed : it is, therefore, hardly necessary to attempt to add more to what the Select Committee has so diligently and well stated ; every man who is capable of examining the situation of the country, will see, that unless we adopt some measure full of strength and life, that we shall suffer this country to be afflicted with frequent dearths, and a constant drain of money from hence to foreigners, for an article which we may provide to great advantage among ourselves : but, even if there were difficulties and objections of some weight, they should not stand in the way of that which is to provide bread for the people ; a measure as necessary as it is to maintain our navy. But a general inclosure act will

will by no means be sufficient: great encouragement must be given, and many discouragements removed, before any thing effectual will be done.

Lands in common, is a state which is traced from the most barbarous condition of society. Afterwards, the lords, or barons, who held certain districts under the name of demesne lands, granted portions of lands in severalty, subject to certain services; and other portions of land were occupied by the tenants of the manor as common fields and meadows, part for pasturage, part for hay as winter provision for cattle, and the rest to be tilled for corn; the remainder was called the lord's waste, and being considered as of little value, the tenants of the manor were allowed certain privileges.

The land granted in severalty, was at an early period inclosed in consequence of the great advantage derived from that improvement; but as soon as the crop of the common fields and meadows was secured, they reverted to a state of common.

commonage to all those who had grants of land in such common fields. The wastes always remained in common, subject to a variety of regulations according to the custom of the different manors,

I have not the means of stating with precision what proportion of the 2,837,873 acres, supposed to have been enclosed in England and Wales within the last 100 years, was common fields, or common arable fields, but I am disposed to believe it was a large proportion. A great part of those lands were fit for pasture; but the generality of commons or waste lands are of an inferior quality, and of a thin soil, and will answer best in an arable state when tithe-free.

I lately travelled through 100 miles as fine as any part of this island, and found almost entirely under pasture, that country which I remember between 30 and 40 years ago as generally under tillage. The increased and increasing expence of arable land, and the prudent wish to avoid
tithe

tithe in kind, must occasion the conversion of much good land from arable to pasture, but proper encouragements and immunities will cause the waste and inferior soils to continue under tillage.

Nothing, however, but the remains of the most barbarous policy can be supposed capable of checking the inclosure of common arable fields, with the view of preventing any part from being turned to pasture. One third part inclosed and well cultivated will produce more than the whole in an uninclosed state; and that management of the soil, which is the most productive, and consequently answers best to the owner, is best for the State.

We have been told, that inclosures are unfavourable to agriculture and to the produce of corn, that trees and hedges encourage vermin and occasion blights, and that the crops in open field lands are always found to be more in quantity, and of a better quality, than in inclosures.

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Nothing

Nothing appears to me more contrary to fact. The mode of management, in respect to common fields, is not at the option of the individual, who may be able to afford, or have the spirit to cultivate in a better manner his portion of land; he is obliged to submit to the custom of the country, that is, the wretched system which prevailed at the earliest period of agriculture; it can never answer to him to adopt any improvement of his narrow intermixed strips of land, or to cultivate turnips, clover, or any new kind of crop, which he cannot feed off separately, or protect from the depredations to which open land is liable, but he must be satisfied with two crops, and then a year's fallow. Inclosure does not necessarily require small subdivisions; a principal object is, to promote the separation of property, to enable the possessor, and to make it his interest, to carry the cultivation to perfection, and to get rid of that great check to improvement, viz. commonage.

Nothing more surely prevents the conversion
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of arable land into pasture, than freedom from tithe, and an adequate price for corn: it was the advanced price of grain that first effectually encouraged tillage; and every law must be considered as highly oppressive and impolitic, that should attempt to prescribe any other mode of agriculture, than that which is beneficial to the land-owner and occupier.

As the inclosure and improvement of waste lands will require a very large sum, we should be careful that the money which would otherwise be so well laid out for the public advantage in the cultivation, is not expended in procuring the inclosure, and in wrangles about petty claims, which are often set up with an interested expectation, to obtain advantages from those who may be supposed will not engage in the expence of a contest or opposition. Our money, instead of being exported for grain, where it encourages the agriculture of other countries to the detriment of our own, might be expended to great advantage on the improvement of the wastes, and

and might be sufficient for the purpose. The Committee on Waste Lands states, (which indeed is generally known,) that the expence prevents many inclosures, and very often exceeds the advantage to the individual *. The increased expence of tillage, and in many instances the extreme dislike of tithe in kind, must, of course, induce those who are capable of any degree of calculation, to convert arable into pasture lands. If we are seriously determined to encourage tillage, the necessary and most effectual means will be a commutation for tithe in kind, and to promote the cultivation of the wastes—it is necessary that they should be for ever tithe-free.

To encourage inclosure, the tithe-owner, if a layman, might have his allotment in land, because in his possession it would not be in mortmain :

* I have been concerned in two inclosures ; in one instance as lord of the manor, and a considerable proprietor of land ; and in the other, as principal proprietor : the inclosure was so expensive, and so managed, that I do not consider myself compensated, as an individual, for the expence in either instance.

main : but the allotment for the church should be by a corn rent or other payment, but not dependent on the crops ; if otherwise, it would discourage tillage. However, whatever arrangement may take place, the tithe-owner would lose nothing that he had ever enjoyed ; and if, in some instances, small tithes had accrued from the waste lands, the average value of those tithes, which would be trifling, might be reserved in the shape of a money payment from the several allotments—but on this subject I shall have more to say hereafter.

It would be wise also to exempt waste lands, which, in future, may be inclosed, from the present land-tax now become permanent ; the district in that case would not pay more than it does at present, but would be greatly relieved by the quota of poor rates paid by the wastes when cultivated. The enormous increase of poor rates is a strong argument in favour of inclosures, and render the cultivation of the waste lands still more necessary ; and that increase of

rates

rates is become a much greater evil than perhaps our Statesmen are aware of.

Such is the interested or scrupulous disposition of many, that it may be expected numbers will revolt against the idea of sacrifices, even such as are proposed, especially when the present pressure ceases; and it may well be remembered how little impression remained after the scarcity in 1796: but can we make too great sacrifices to avert the frequent return of dearths, which evidently afflict us each time in an increased degree? In respect to the loss of the people, the number who die in consequence of bad living, improper and unaccustomed food, are infinitely more numerous than those who perish from hunger. If there are those who are willing to submit to a precarious state of dependence on other countries for their food, perhaps the recollection of the immense addition to public expences, which they must ultimately pay, may make some impression on them, besides the immense payments

ments to foreign countries for the purchase of grain, and the freight of it. We paid in bounties on grain imported in 1796, near 600,000*l*. There is great additional pay to the Army, additional expence in respect to the Navy, and in all contracts on the public account, in consequence of the high price of provisions. The sums expended for the relief of the poor, in various ways, is probably equal at least to half the rental of the kingdom: the deficiency in the public revenue must also be made up; great deficiencies arising from the prohibition of the home distilleries, manufactures of starch, &c. &c. and all this certainly arises from a neglect of cultivation*.

I have

* Italy, which formerly, like England, exported corn, became dependent on all the provinces for its daily bread. Varro and Columella complain of this, but never ascribed the alteration to the increase of its inhabitants, but to the neglect of tillage; which Hume, in his Essay on the Populousness of Ancient Times, says, "was a natural effect of that pernicious practice of importing corn, in order to distribute it gratis among the Roman citizens, and a very bad means of multiplying the inhabitants of any country. The Sportula

I have considered as not much better than waste lands, those immense tracts, assumed by, or appropriated to the Sovereign, during ages of scanty population, under the name of forests or chases, for the purposes of hunting and hawking. Our historians, in all ages, have marked, with due severity, the barbarous and tyrannical conduct of William the Conqueror, and his successor William Rufus, who laid waste 30 miles of fine country, "to dedicate it to wild beasts and the sport of dogs." For which purpose he destroyed the towns, villages, thirty-six mother churches, and ruined the inhabitants of their parishes. And our ancient historians do not fail to consider, as a mark of divine vengeance, for the extravagant procedure

tula so much talked of by Martial and Juvenal, being presents regularly made by the great lords to their small clients, must have had a like tendency to produce idleness, debauchery, and a continual decay among the people. The parish rates have at present the same bad consequences in England." The situation of the Romans in their dependence on other countries for their subsistence, was not so desperate as ours, because they could command their foreign provinces; we have no influence over the countries from whence we import corn.

dure of the Conqueror, that his sons Richard and William Rufus, and his grandson Robert, lost their lives in a forest formed as above described.

These forests and chases being a most fruitful source of abuse and patronage, we cannot be surprized that a number of persons, who are benefited by abuses, or derive advantage from lands continuing in the present uncultivated state, will raise objections ; but they are not justifiable in suggesting, for the sake of preserving their emoluments, that it would be injurious to the first person in these kingdoms, or to his family. To retain these forests, even under all the circumstances of the present times, certainly would not be quite so extravagant as the Act of William the Conqueror above stated ; but it is not decent to represent, as some have done, that a Prince distinguished as the father of his people, and the great encourager of agriculture, would not forego some advantages to obtain a great public good. There cannot be a wish that the Royal Family should be deprived of any parks or forests that

may be necessary for their amusement, or of which they can actually make use. Windsor Forest certainly comes within that description, and all the forests and parks in Middlesex, Berkshire, Surry, and Kent, and perhaps a part of the New Forest; but all the rest should not be kept in a state of waste for the amusement or gratification of a few favoured persons. There is no wish, however, to deprive those persons of any advantages they possess; let them have the lands in perpetuity, on condition of cultivating them. Let the interest of the crown be transferred to the present possessors of the lands on reasonable terms; let there be an end of these grants or leases, that promote destructive wastes, which establish the savage system of maintaining these lands as a receptacle, according to the term of the old grants, for wild beasts. The reservation of pasturage for deer; the allowance under various pretences to cut wood, to lop, also to cut off the heads of trees to make pollards, to furnish brouzing for deer, the right of commonage to adjacent towns, the custom of inclosing
for

for nine years, and then laying open to deer and common cattle; all these circumstances prevent the lands in question from being in a state that is advantageous either to the possessor or to the public. Let those who possess rights, privileges, or claims of any kind, have a proportional share; let all have the power of selling who cannot cultivate; let the share of the crown be sold, and the money arising from that sale be laid out or appropriated for the use of the Royal Family, in such manner as his Majesty shall direct. The object is to promote the improvement of the soil, and that can never be done but by making it private property; and this argument goes to the sale of all the crown lands, or lands in mortmain, which, without the least doubt, would be highly advantageous to the country.

It has been my opinion, that it might be advisable, on account of our Navy, to keep such parts of the forests as actually grow timber in the hands of the crown, but not unless they are to be

be regulated differently than they are at présent, and entirely for the growth of timber; but the abuses in respect to these forests are so inveterate, that there seems ground to believe much more timber would be raised if the forests were private property, and that it would ultimately be cheaper for the public to purchase the timber. To those who should say the trees might be grubbed up at the pleasure of the proprietor, it may be answered, that the destruction of the woods might be prohibited on forfeiture of the premises, and a rent for the lands might be reserved in timber of certain dimensions for the use of the Navy*. The greater part of these forests are so free from wood, that a foreigner passing through the country, not acquainted with the language, would suppose the word forest † meant land cleared from trees.

As nearly as I can collect from the reports of the

* It is to be lamented that no steps are taken for the encouragement of the growth of timber.

† *Lucus à non lucendo.*

the Commissioners appointed to inquire into the state of the woods and forests, it appears to me, that, on the whole extent of them, there were at the time of the inquiry, viz. 1788, only 125,801 loads* of oak timber then fit, or likely to be fit for the Navy, and 2530 trees in Rockingham Forest, valued at 2049*l.*; and that there still remains uninclosed, and in a great measure waste, or subject to the feed of deer, 175,432 acres. If I have not misunderstood the reports, this statement surely justifies the observation, that the quantity of land I have mentioned is comparatively not much better than in a state of waste, considering that the soil is generally good and fit for tillage.

As to the particular manner of bringing waste lands into cultivation, whether by a new system

of

* About one third of the above quantity of timber is in the Forest of Dean, and the trees must be in general of an inconsiderable size, as 46,000 contain only 41,000 loads of timber. See in the Appendix, an account extracted from the reports (which convey so much useful knowledge) on the forests and land revenues of the crown; it shews the quantities of land and timber in each forest.

of inclosure, or by some improvement of the mode by writ of partition; I do not conceive there can be any insurmountable difficulty, nor that it is necessary now to discuss in detail the exact method of effecting that purpose. It appears to me to be a thing that must be done, and it is comparatively a matter of indifference to whom these lands shall belong, so that they fall into the hands of those who can cultivate them, and will be interested in a permanent improvement of them. One circumstance seems necessary, which is to adopt the Scotch principle, namely, "that a division should be made at the instance of any one having interest:" this will be the best and the surest means of enforcing the cultivation of the wastes.

The Country expects from the Legislature, which alone in such matters can counteract the perverseness of human nature, an effectual measure; a designing affectation of quibbling delicacy in respect to property, should not be suffered to prevent such a measure. Any purse-proud, overbearing, or wrong-headed man, may deter

deter others from proceeding in the useful work in question, as they know the expence and trouble of contest and opposition will be greater than the advantage to them as individuals by the inclosure. It seems by no means wise longer to depend, in this case, on obtaining the consent of a majority of those who have claims : it is not reasonable that those who have rights to waste lands, should not be allowed to do that which is so advantageous to the community, namely, to cultivate them ; the share of those who are not in the humour to make land productive, may have it allotted to remain in a state of waste, if the Legislature should think it becoming their superintending powers to permit it ; but, it would not be unreasonable, if the shares of those who do not think it worth their while to avail themselves of them, should after a certain time be forfeited, as the public suffers great loss by their neglect. Sir George Stanton, in his account of an embassy to China, remarks the peculiar attention of the Chinese, to leave not the smallest spot of ground unoccupied that could be applied to

to any use; that ample provision is made for the constant cultivation of the lands, by the forfeiture, to the Sovereign, of such as are uncultivated and neglected, who grants them out anew to farmers willing to undertake their culture, a tenure similar to that on which some mines are held in Derbyshire, by adventurers in such undertakings. It has already been observed, that it is not reasonable any man who is willing and able to improve his share, should be prevented from claiming it; and those who are averse to inclosure, have no ground of complaint, because others are permitted to cultivate their allotment. Instead of encouraging the whims of individuals, when they so essentially interfere with the public good, the Legislature should controul a disposition which is detrimental to the State, just as much as it does in many other instances which are not so hurtful to the community; and rather than the country should lose the advantage of the land's being in a productive state, it is as reasonable to enforce by indirect, if not by direct means, the cultivation of those shares which are neglected, as it is to oblige individuals,

duals to incur great expence in cutting large drains to draw the water from their neighbours lands, to prevent their being overflowed, or to part with their property to make a turnpike road or a navigation.

I have remarked, that it will not be sufficient to lighten the expence of inclosing and cultivating the waste lands; that a further spur and encouragement to tillage will be necessary.

I should slight the great object which we ought to endeavour by every means to attain, if I did not represent a commutation for tythes in kind, as the most necessary of all the steps which can be taken. I am fully aware of the relentless attacks which will of course be made on him who ventures to give such an opinion; and I should gladly decline the trouble of a defence, were I not sensible, that should I succeed in recommending the measure, I could not render a greater service. If I had not considered it in that light, I should not place myself in a state of warfare with a number of per-

sons who can write, and who have much leisure: but I am prepared for a certain portion of illiberality, which is sometimes, and profusely vented against those who have presumed to agitate such questions; they will be proofs that the arguments used are felt, and cannot be fairly answered.

I am not disposed to state any thing that is unfavourable or disrespectful to the members of the Church; I respect them as a body and individually; my constant intercourse and connection with them, has impressed me with sentiments of esteem and regard; and I know them to be generally more formed from a superior class of society, than in any other country. I do not wish to succeed by invective, nor that those means should be employed in reply; I have long considered the subject; and whatever mode of *argument* may be used, I shall content myself at present with declaring, that the most interested and most eager, cannot be more tenacious of tythe in kind, than I am in respect to the established church, and that it appears

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to me almost a self-evident proposition, that a relinquishment of that kind of tythe, tends most to the permanency, and may eventually preserve the establishment itself.

The interests and feelings of mankind, in the strongest manner, revolt against an imposition which demands not only a tenth of the natural produce, but also of the skill, industry and expence, now become so infinitely greater than heretofore, that it has in a manner altered the nature of this tax, the weight of which is become almost intolerable. The tythe now exacted is by no means consonant to the spirit of the original institution ; it has gradually grown up to be what it is, through the great power of the church in former days, and the interpretation the Clergy, who generally presided in the courts, or the courts under their influence, thought proper to give it.

It is curious to observe the progress of this claim ; it has gone beyond what is warranted by the Levitical Law, and assumed a right to the tenth

tenth of all industry. I do not wish to state ludicrously how far it was extended; I shall only observe, that it did not take place in England till 800 years after Christ. When the subjugation and abject credulity of the laity, and the despotism of the church, was at the highest, a general counsel under the Pope's legates was held, where it was boldly asserted, that a tenth of all the possessions of the laity were due to the church, *Jure divino*—To which Offa, King of Mercia*, a weak prince, agreed, to obtain the Pope's pardon for the murder of Ethelbert, King of East Anglia.

This tenth was originally applied to the maintenance of the Church, the Clergy, and the Poor; and when tythes were first claimed, very little more than the spontaneous fruits of the earth were included.

The Legislature considered the possessions of the Church as the property of the kingdom, in

* Mercia extended from the Thames to the Humber, and from the Severn to the kingdoms of Essex and East Anglia.

in the reigns of Richard II. and Henry IV. The 15th Richard II. which was confirmed by the 4th of Henry IV. says, "because divers damages and hindrances often have happened, and daily do happen, to the parishioners of diver places, by the appropriation of benefices of the same places; it is agreed and assented, that in every licence to be made, from henceforth, in the Chancery, of the appropriation of any parish church, it shall be expressly contained and comprised, that the diocesan of the place, upon the appropriation of such churches, shall ordain, according to the value of such churches, a convenient sum of money, to be paid and distributed yearly, of the fruits and profits of the said churches, by those that shall have the said churches in proper use, and by their successors, to the poor parishioners of the said churches, in aid of their living and sustenance for ever, and also that the Vicar be well and sufficiently endowed."

Blackstone observes, "that at the first establishment of parochial clergy, a fourth only of
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the tythes was distributed as a provision for the incumbent; that another fourth was allotted to the poor, another for maintaining the fabric of the church, and the other for the use of the bishop; but when bishopricks were otherwise amply endowed, the division of tythes was into three parts only."

But although it cannot be doubted, that as late as the fourteenth century, the poor had a legal claim for a portion of the tythes, yet neither those who wish a more equal partition of the income of the clergy, nor any others, can be desirous of diminishing the provision for the church, by throwing on it so great a weight as that of the poor is now become: on the contrary, it must be the wish of all, that no clergyman should have so small a provision as is the case with many at present; every thinking man must wish there was a stipend sufficient, decently and respectably, to maintain a clergyman in each parish or district, and that his income should be dependent on his residence.

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I have been so fortunate as not to have met with more than one man who maintained the divine right of tythes ; I should not however think it necessary to dispute that point. I must observe, that in the year 794, it was ordained, that all those who are seized of *church lands* should pay the tythe, and the next consequence was, the obligation extended to all property. I consider tythes merely as an imposition for the maintenance of the church, which the clergy, when omnipotent in Christendom, and when they were in a manner judge and jury, defined and interpreted as they pleased ; and at length their interpretations were considered as the law of the land. But by far the greater part of the Christian world is now freed from them, even France, Italy, and Sicily; at least in the manner in which they are and may be demanded in England and Ireland ; the severe mode of exaction that takes place in the two latter kingdoms, is unknown in other parts of the world. In the north of Europe, in Russia and Holland, there are no tythes. In Sweden, Denmark, and a great part of Germany, the salary of the clergy

clergy is paid by the State. In France, previous to the abolition of tythes, there was no tythe of wool, nor on any of the new products, such as potatoes, turnips, &c.; that which was called a tenth, very generally did not exceed a twentieth, and in some countries it is less than a thirtieth.

The unprejudiced politician must see, that no tax can possibly be devised more oppressive than tythe in kind, and, what is even still worse, more hostile to all improvements. It is well known that large tracts of land have remained not much better than waste, because, if cultivated, the tythe of the great expence incurred would have been exacted; it is also known that the cultivation of considerable tracts of land, which have been highly improved, would not have been undertaken, but would have remained covered with heath and neglected, if they had not been tythe free. It is well known that the claim of tythes prevents the conversion of pasturage into arable lands, and that there is a great extent of poor thin pasture land of little value, which by
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the plough might be rendered very productive: middling grass land, when tilled, gives frequently large crops of corn, and the value is greatly raised, whether it be restored to pasturage after a certain time, or not. It is not necessary to state, in great detail, how discouraging is the expence of bringing waste or unproductive lands into tillage; that the tythe of the capital is taken; and that, of the large sums required for banking, fencing, draining, manuring, or in any way improving such land, the tenth part is payable to the tythe owner. In the case of poor land, which requires extraordinary expence and labour to procure a crop, the tythe owner may carry away much more than equal to the profit of the farmer, or to the full annual rent *. The land owner might think

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* An ingenious tract, just published by the Rev. Mr. Archdeacon Heslop, which gives a comparative statement of the food produced by arable and grass lands, and the returns arising from each, furnishes a strong proof that the profits of tillage, in open field land and good soils, can ill afford to pay tythes and taxes of all kinds.

The following statement will shew at one view the returns per acre from land, both of the 1st and 2d quality :

it very desirable to give up a full tenth of his land ; but the tythe owner expects the tythe of the value of the land, and of all the expences and labour in procuring a crop ; and the farmer, of one hundred acres of arable land, is compelled to pay the rent of 10 acres to the tythe owner, as well as to till the land and reap the crop

	Wheat crop on the average of 2 years.	Barley crop	Wheat & Barley on average of 3 years.	Dairy land.	Grazing land.
Returns { 1st quality	£. 1 4 2½	1 2 6	1 8 7½	1 10 6	1 4 10½
2d ditto	- 0 3 1c½	0 19 9	0 6 7	1 7 5½	
Difference	£. 1 0 3¼	0 29 10	0 17 0	0 3 0½	

The arable of the first quality is rated at 22s. 6d. per acre, producing 29 bushels of wheat per acre, at 8s. Barley, 28 bushels per acre, at 4s. per bushel, after deducting rent and expences, leaves a profit of 1l. 3s. 7½d.

Arable of the 2d quality is rated at 17s. per acre, producing 22 bushels of wheat per acre, at 8s. Barley, 24 bushels per acre at 4s. rent and expences deducted, leaves a profit of 6s. 7d.

Out of the above, tythes and taxes of all kind are to be deducted. Mr. Heslop observes, that it appears land of the 2d quality, (and all land which will not yield considerably more than three quarters of wheat per acre) is unprofitable in tillage, under 2 crops and a fallow, which is the general course in open fields, and almost universal in this district, (Buckinghamshire below the chiltern hills;) and the reason is obvious ; the expences of cultivation are the same in both classes ; but the produce on the inferior land is seven bushels less, and the diminution of rent only 5s. 6d.

crop for him. In many cases he gives up one third or one half; and on a small farm, if tythe be taken in kind, nearly the whole of his profit*.

Mr. Knight, in a tract relative to Herefordshire, calculates, "that there are in that county at least 200,000 acres of arable land which are subject to the payment of tythes. This land he supposes might be brought into a proper state of cultivation, by an additional annual expence of 10s. per acre, or upwards. This additional expence, he says, would pay the farmers 10 per cent. profit, and bring into the market an increase of produce of the value of 110,000 l. per ann. besides employing five thousand labourers. But the tythe owners would take 11,000 out of the value of the increased produce, and therefore the farmers would lose all their profit, and one per cent. on their capital.

* But in the case of only one half of the rent taken by the church, as a tenth of the produce, and a fifth claimed by the state, the remainder of the rent often did not pay the poor rates, even before the present scarcity of provisions took place.

tal. Hence it may be inferred, that the tythe laws prevent this great improvement in the county of Hereford; and if we apply this mode of reasoning to all the counties in England, the loss of produce through the kingdom, in consequence of the tythe laws, will be incalculable."

It may here be observed, that the capital engaged in tillage has not the advantage of being turned so often as that employed in any other business. In many branches of trade the capital is turned several times in a year; in dairy farms, twice; in tillage, at most once in a year, and in many instances not more than once in several years. To alleviate this disadvantage, and to encourage the employment of money in the manner most beneficial to the state, it might be highly useful to exonerate tillage from the grievous oppression of tythe taken in kind; it might in some degree restore a better balance between trade and agriculture; it has been long thought that too great a proportion of our capital has been diverted from the latter

to the former; and it has been asserted, "that much interior weakness has been caused by removing multitudes from our *natural fixed basis, land, to the artificial and fluctuating basis, trade.*"

It is well observed in the survey of Denbighshire, on the subject of tythes, "that the exertions of England in the mercantile and manufacturing lines of business, have, for the last half century, been vigorous almost beyond compare; yet in the line of agriculture it has been languid; whereas in Scotland, though she started late, and has made comparatively small progress in industry, yet the exertions in agriculture have nearly kept pace with those in the other departments." This is ascribed "principally to the drawing of tythes in kind, which is stated to be peculiarly discouraging to agriculture, as it not only affects the tenant, but even the proprietor himself, who must on this account forego many attempts he could have made in improvements with profit. The proprietors of land in the neighbourhood of Aberdeen, who justly consider the expence of improving

proving the soil as a purchase price, would in all cases find, that though they may have a reasonable profit where no tythe is drawn, they could have had none at all if that had been paid in kind. Indeed, in most cases, that tythe alone is more than the whole profit they ever expect to derive from it. The consequence here is obvious; but the retardment which this circumstance will make, when operating in millions of cases over a whole kingdom, baffles all attempt at calculation. To avoid this dreaded evil, extensive tracts of land are left in England in perpetual grass, when it is by no means in a condition for yielding the most abundant produce in that state. The quantity of bread corn is thus necessarily diminished, and with it the total amount of food, even for beasts, is curtailed; nothing can be so ruinous to agriculture."

The Hertfordshire survey truly states, "Where the land is tythe free, and occupied by the owner, his interest and that of the public exactly tally; the land will be brought to, and con-

tinued in a proper state of manurage: It is possible in such cases, that the public may have the best of the bargain; and land thus circumstanced, though of the very worst quality, be mended for ever, and at an expence for which that amendment will never compensate to the improver, who, actuated by a hope of future gain which may never be realised, or the honest pride of decorating his rocks and sands with the chearful face of smiling plenty, will build his tower before he calculates his expence; but if the rector is to share the crops, he will balance; a few plain figures will settle the profit to the rector, and the loss to himself; the lands will remain uncultivated, and the public never be benefited by the crops they would otherwise yield. In every case where tythes in kind are payable and insisted on, improvements slacken. This general rule will be found without exception."

Our political and historical writers, the most esteemed and of the best authority, have given their opinion on the several parts of this subject. Of such respectable writers, I prefer the
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quotation of their own words as testimonies of the sentiments I offer to the public; and, if I trespass by repetition when I select the best authorities in support of them, I think it will be more satisfactory to the reader to have the exact statement of the author placed before him, than my conception of his meaning.

I do not however wish to dwell invidiously or unnecessarily on what has been stated by them, in respect to the means used by the Clergy, supported by the Pope, to acquire the property for themselves which was intended for public purposes, or to comment on the conduct of the Clergy of those times, which has already been too often represented. It is by no means essential to the present question, to do more than to mention historically and shortly that part of the subject.

Spelman observes, that the Clergy ventured farther than they were warranted even by the Levitical law, and pretended to draw the 10th of all industry, merchandise, wages of labourers, and

and pay of soldiers. Selden and others have stated the claims of the church. Padre Paolo exposes the practices that were employed to establish tythes.

Hume observes, that in the reign of King Ethelwolf, about the middle of the ninth century, "the ecclesiastics, in those days of ignorance, made very rapid advances in the acquisition of power and grandeur; and inculcating the most absurd and most interested doctrines, though they met sometimes, from the contrary interests of the laity, with an opposition which it required time and address to overcome, they found no obstacle in their reason or understanding. Not contented with the donations of land made them by the Saxon princes and nobles, and with the temporary oblations from the devotion of the people, they had cast a wishful eye on a vast revenue, which they claimed as belonging to them by a divine indefeasible right and inherent title. However little versed in the scriptures, they had been able to discover, that the priests under the Jewish law possessed a tenth of all the produce of the land, and, forgetting what they

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themselves taught, that the moral part only of that law was obligatory on Christians, they insisted that this donation was a perpetual property, conferred by heaven on those who officiated at the altar. During some centuries the whole scope of sermons and homilies was directed to this purpose; and one would have imagined, from the general tenor of these discourses, that all the practical parts of Christianity were comprehended in the exact and faithful payment of tythes to the clergy. Though parishes had been instituted in England near two centuries before, the ecclesiastics had never yet been able to get possession of the tythes; and they therefore seized the present favourable opportunity of making that acquisition, when a weak superstitious prince was on the throne, and when the people, discouraged by their losses from the Danes, and terrified with the fear of future invasions, were susceptible of any impression which bore the appearance of religion; and agreed even in the present desperate extremity, that the revenue of the church should be exempted from all burdens, though imposed for national defence and security."

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Adam Smith considers tythes "as a land tax, ultimately paid by the landlord, which he observed, though under the appearance of perfect equality, are very unequal taxes; a certain portion of the produce being, in different situations, equivalent to a very different portion of the rent; that in some soils it may not exceed a fifth, and in others one half of the rent." He adds, "that tythes are always a great discouragement both to the improvements of the landlord and to the cultivation of the farmer. The one cannot venture to make the most important, which are generally the most expensive improvements; nor the other to raise the most valuable, which are generally too the most expensive crops; when the church, which lays out no part of the expence, is to share so very largely in the profit. The cultivation of madder was for a long time confined by the tythe to the United Provinces, which, being Presbyterian countries*, and upon that account exempted from this destructive tax, enjoyed a sort of

* As tythes do not exist in their objectionable shape under any presbyterian church, the friends of the established church should reflect, that the difference between the sects of Protestantism is not so great as to prevent a wish

of monopoly of that useful dying drug against the rest of Europe."

I have much pleasure in stating the opinion of Mr. Archdeacon Paley, in his moral and political philosophy. He says, "Agriculture is discouraged by every constitution of landed property, which lets in those who have no concern in the improvement to a participation of the profit. But, of all institutions which are in this way adverse to cultivation and improvement, none is so noxious as that of tythes. A claimant here enters into the produce, who contributed no expence whatever to the production. When years perhaps of care and toil have matured an improvement, when the husbandman sees new crops ripening to his skill and industry; the moment he is ready to put his sickle to the grain, he finds himself compelled to divide his harvest with a stranger. Tythes are a tax not only upon industry, but upon that industry which feeds mankind, upon that

wish from arising in favour of that establishment, which does not entail so vexatious and pernicious a burthen on the country. Tythes in kind have always been the greatest enemy of the church of England.

that species of exertion which it is the aim of all wise laws to cherish and promote ; and to uphold and excite which, composes the main benefit that the community receives from the whole system of trade, and the success of commerce ; and, together with the more general inconveniences that attend the exactions of tythes, there is this additional evil, that they operate as a bounty upon pasturage. The burthen of the tax falls with its chief, if not its whole weight upon tillage ; that is to say, upon that precise mode of cultivation which it is the business of the state to relieve and remunerate in preference to every other."

The opinion of Blackstone has already been mentioned in respect to the application and abuse of tythes. That eminent Judge, Lord Mansfield, when a question of tythes was before him, took occasion to say, " that if a Bill were brought into parliament to provide for the clergy in some other way than by tythes, and in a manner more suitable to their office, it should have his hearty concurrence and firm
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support." Earl Bathurst, also, was zealous in favour of a commutation of tythes. I may add, that I never met with any man who was not peculiarly interested in tythe, that held different sentiments from those that have been stated.

The works of Mr. Arthur Young are so well known, it is scarcely necessary to say he has for many years, with his usual energy, expressed himself strongly as to the pernicious effects of tythes taken in kind, and of feudal restrictions in respect to improvements; and Mr. Ruggle, one of the last and most instructive writers on these subjects, in his *History of the Poor*, observes, "that our constitutional lawyers have uniformly asserted, that the divine right to tythes certainly ceased with the Jewish Theocracy, and it is not proved that in fact it ever existed." He also observes, "that it was no wonder the silent claims of the poor for that dole which they had been accustomed to receive the distribution of, from the incumbent clergy, in obedience of the ordinance of counsels

sels and of papal decrees, were of no avail during several centuries of warfare and of bloody contention among the descendants of William the Norman, and between the Houses of York and Lancaster; and that the right itself, under which the ecclesiastical estates of the kingdom were held in trust for the maintenance of the poor, laity as well as clergy, should have been forgotten, and that these claims should have remained dormant, it by no means follows as a consequence, that because such rights of charity as these, owing to the rough and unsettled circumstances of the times, were dormant, they should become extinct, especially when so large a proportion of revenue still remained to the church, the possessors of which, however charitable in their doctrines, by degrees withdrew the rightful and accustomed proportion of their estates from the repairs of churches and the maintenance of the poor."

Most of the writers on this subject urge, with a moral view, the necessity of a commutation. There can be no doubt that the exaction of
 tythes

tythes in kind, has at all times produced the most bitter disputes between the clergy and people*. An arbitrary spirit of exaction on the one hand, and as strong a spirit of evasion and perverseness on the other, should not be dependent on human dispositions. Although, in many instances, it is not abused, the severe and disgusting power which the courts must support as the law of the land, is too much to trust in any hands. We should wish, however, to avoid the animosity or even the the perverse resistance

* Candour requires I should acknowledge, that an opinion *somewhat* different has been given, namely, that the exaction of tythes in kind, acts as a cement between the parson and his parishioners; but as it is not easy to conceive any maxim more inconsistent with common sense, truth, or experience, I hardly believe it has made the kind of impression that was intended. It has been also recommended, and, I understand, by the same anonymous master of arts, as the most simple and efficacious mode of preventing disputes between the clergy and laity, to compel the clergy to take their tythes in kind. I have often heard some of the best friends to agricultural improvement express a wish that the tythe owners, instead of gradually and *seriatim* taking tythe in kind, would together and at once demand it, because it could not be supposed that, if done at once, any country would bear or submit to such an oppressive and impolitic exaction.

resistance that so naturally arises on the part of those who must deeply feel the compulsion of yielding to so galling a tax, which takes from them so large a proportion of the profit resulting from the great exertions of their labour, skill, and industry. When the clergy are thus considered, they cannot do their office with effect. Under these circumstances, the best doctrines will be received with distrust; in many instances, the Church has been deserted, Christianity has been brought into contempt, and the beneficial influence the clergy ought to have, which might on proper occasions be exerted to great advantage, and in troublesome times might preserve the establishment, is lost; they become an object of attack, in which the interests and opinions of a large proportion of the community occasion much mischief, and among these enemies are included a great number who otherwise would be warm friends to the church.

In a debate on Tythes, which took place in the House of Lords, 1781, it was stated,

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“ That tythes in kind, or annual compositions in money, are a source of perpetual strife and ill-will, and the cause of inveterate and incurable disagreements between the pastor and his parishioners. It was hardly to be expected that the flock would be much edified by the ministrations of a man whom they considered as their daily oppressor ; nor, on the contrary, was it probable the parson would take much pains to convey spiritual benefits to those who were constantly devising means to harass and perplex him. It is beyond human belief, that men would listen to a preacher with reverence and respect, when he was the perpetual object of their personal enmity, and the supposed author of the heaviest grievances they had to complain of.

“ But when this odious and unpopular Tax should be invariably fixed, instead of being at the will of every new incumbent, and, as it frequently happened, annually altered, according to the caprice, litigious disposition, or avarice of the same incumbent, the farmer would proceed

ceed with zeal and alacrity, under the idea of perfect security, knowing that he was working and advancing his money for himself, and not for another."

Dr. Hinchliffe, late bishop of Peterborough, said, "It was notorious that the interest of the clergyman was deemed incompatible with the interest of his parishioners; the merit of the ecclesiastic was viewed through a wrong medium, and the pastor was sunk in the tythe-collector."*

The mode of tything is approved of by none; the respectable body of the clergy who reside on their livings are much exposed to its bad effects, and lament the want of powers to apply an adequate remedy. On the other hand, if the rector or tythe-gatherer be of a litigious and troublesome disposition, to indulge which the tythe laws furnish him with great facilities and temptation, the evil is great. The author of the Hertfordshire Survey, observes, "If the tythes are exacted in kind, continual disputes and

* Parliamentary Debates, 1781.

and bickerings take place ; the farmers slacken in their improvements, give their spiritual guide all the trouble in their power while collecting his tythes, and cheat him if they can ; he recurs to the law, and of course is detested. In rainy harvest weather, when the corn, immediately on being cut, should be housed or stacked, the farmer must wait till the rector's bailiff has set out the tythe, the farmer is often obliged to carry the crop at the risk of a law suit, and the tythe is often seen rotting on the ground, to the great scandal and detriment of the community. These are notorious melancholy proofs ; and whoever attempts to refute them, must be driven to the pitiful necessity of reasoning in the face of a fact."

I must here express a regret that another great ground of animosity has not been removed, and that as the Crown gave up the prerogative of *nullum tempus occurrit regi*, the same was not done in respect to the Church, when Mr. Seymour moved a bill to secure the possessions of the subject against the dormant claims

claims of the clergy. Blackstone says, it is unaccountable that the date of legal prescription or memory should still continue to be reckoned from an æra so very antiquated as the reign of Richard the First. It encourages a litigious spirit to harass the country with law.

I wish very much it may be understood, that I do not object to the power of exacting tythe in kind, or an annual composition, in the hands of the clergy more than in those of any other description of persons : on the contrary, I object much more to that power in lay hands ; because, whatever may be urged in favour of such a mode of provision for the clergy, there is not the semblance of an argument for the suffering such a hurtful system to exist in other hands ; a greater nuisance does not exist : as such it should be treated, and, as the Legislature does in many instances, there should be no hesitation on their part in obliging the owners to take a compensation. The lay impropiators generally exact tythes more rigidly than the clergy ; they have a permanent interest in doing so, much greater than

than the precarious incumbent for a few years. There are exceptions however from this rule; and some of the latter are found, who brave all the disgust and odium that result from such a conduct, and use no other exertion than that of requiring authoritatively the utmost farthing from their parishioners.

It may here be observed, that the discipline of the church, feeble as it is, suffers much in the cases where the clergy have no stipend but that for which they bargain with the lay impropiators, who have the power of naming those who will at the lowest rate undertake the ministry of the gospel.

Both ecclesiastical and lay impropiators wish to treat tythes exactly on the same footing as other property; they must be content however to hold them under the circumstances in which they came into their hands. It has been shewn that they were undoubtedly originally granted for different and other purposes than those for which they are now claimed.

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The Legislature has repeatedly interfered concerning them, and differently from other property, and surely have not relinquished the power of controuling the abuse of them; and as those who hold this species of property think fit to depend on the rule that *nullum tempus occurrit ecclesiæ*, they can neither consistently nor decently object to the principle in respect to every thing that relates to tythes and church lands*.

They were first granted for charitable uses, and for the performance of certain religious duties. Prideaux and the most respectable ecclesiastical writers consider the ministers of the church "as only usufructuaries in respect to tythes and church lands, and receiving the annual income as their stipend for the service they do in the church."

The clergy, before the Reformation, had in a considerable degree perverted the use of the income

* Mr Rugglis observes, they were obtained in the name of the Poor, and there would be as much justice in the maxim, *nullum tempus occurrit pauperibus*.

income thus granted, from the original intention. There is no stronger instance of the profligacy of Henry the Eighth, than in the manner of his granting the income of the clergy, and of great establishments to favourites, without the least consideration of the charitable purposes for which they were intended by the donors, or of any religious and public institution: those establishments, however, in some respects abused, relieved the poor; and the destruction of them brought on the necessity, in the following reign, of making a provision for those who had been supported by such establishments, and laid the foundation of what we now call the poor rates.

It cannot be denied that the Legislature has not observed the same unalterable principle in respect to church, as in regard to other property, and on the most justifiable ground; because the interest of the state, and not of individuals, was in question; and that which was intended for the maintenance of the church, the ministry of the gospel, and the relief of the poor, was a public

public concern, and necessarily under the protection, the controul and regulation of parliament, which has frequently interfered, and particularly by peculiar exemptions in regard to tythe, money payments have been fixed by act of parliament in lieu of tythes in several instances; that kind of commutation took place in respect to about fifty churches in London, in the reign of Charles the Second, and continues to this time.

The author of "Tythes Indefensible, or Observations on the Origin and Effects of Tythes," justly observes, "It is certainly an unwise system which makes religion thus oppressive on the public, and which lays the foundation of innumerable quarrels between priest and people. Contentions between the pastor and his flock cannot but be extremely injurious to religion, and destructive of the very purposes for which a Christian ministry is appointed. The clergyman who quarrels with his parishioners on account of tythes, is seldom troubled with a large congregation at his church; and when

people desert their parish church, they do not often frequent any other. They are led first to despise the clergyman, and then the religion of which he professes himself a minister."

"But it is a matter of the greatest consequence to the civil government of this country, that the Christian religion should be revered and understood; and if any part of our ecclesiastical establishment, or the abuse of it by the clergy, be such as may tend to bring Christianity into contempt, the State ought to interfere to remove the evil. Had this been attended to in France, before infidelity and licentiousness had spread through all ranks of society, that nation might have preserved some degree of moral and religious principle, and have enjoyed at this moment prosperity and peace."

After I had entered on this subject, I first read the excellent tract I have just quoted, written by Mr. Thompson of Hull. I find there, well stated, many arguments besides those that had occurred to others, or to myself, and
much

much information ; of part of which I have endeavoured to avail myself : Those who wish to enter further into the subject, will be well satisfied with a work which I hope is in many hands, and which prevents me from going into some details that otherwise might have been more necessary.

I should be glad to decline (as I have done in respect to inclosures) embarrassing the ground of necessity, by proposing any particular mode of commutation, which might clash with, or revolt the opinion of those who may be convinced of the necessity, but have some favourite plan for commuting tythes. That there is no insurmountable difficulty I am convinced, but I am disposed to get rid of tythe in kind, as counteracting improvement, almost on any terms, even by giving an adequate portion of the land, however objectionable the principle really is, of suffering so much land to be in mortmain, and, of course, never likely to be in the same state of improvement as lands which are private property and alienable, and consequently

consequently having repeated chances of melioration ; for there is not a more certain axiom, than that improvement generally follows alienation.

The suffering of tythes in lay hands, is, as has been observed, still less supportable than in those of the clergy ; because it cannot be alleged there is the least ground of necessity for it, although, in respect to the latter, it may be said there is difficulty in providing a substitute, but there is none in giving land to a lay proprietor, as it would not be in mortmain : It would, in respect to improvement, be on the same footing as other private property, the possessors of which would have a permanent interest in the highest improvement of it, which cannot be expected in respect to lands let for a limited number of years, or fineable in proportion to the improvement which may be made. Some slight instances perhaps may be found, of persons making certain improvements on such tenures ; but I can have no respect for their powers of calculation, and it is perfectly

perfectly clear, that, under such circumstances, it cannot answer to make any great establishments of buildings, manufactures, &c. if it be possible to purchase other land at any rate. But if there were no objections to land being in mortmain, there would still be many on the part of the clergy to whom another kind of provision might be better suited. They have not often the means, nor are they always intelligent in the management of land : it requires an expence beyond what can be repaid to them, to put into the most productive state those lands which would be liable to great abuse and neglect ; especially as the tenure would not be such as to encourage improvement, every new incumbent being different from an hereditary possessor, who has a permanent interest in encouraging his tenant.

In Scotland the landholder may demand a valuation of his tythes by commissioners, after which he is not liable to pay any increased value of the tythes, and he may buy them at nine years purchase, on the valuation of the commissioners ;

missioners ; as the purchaser is obliged to pay the stipend of the minister of the parish, and such augmentation hereafter as the judges of the court of session may think fit. Before the owners begin to improve their lands, they may obtain a valuation of the tythes of the present produce, and preclude any increase of the demand of the tythe owner : thus the landowners may be exempt from paying to the tythe owners a tenth part of the produce of all their future labours and expences.

A commutation of tythes for government annuities has been suggested somewhat on the principle of the act for the sale of the land-tax. That principle would have been much better employed for the purpose of obtaining the commutation in question, as the State had a better right to regulate a property which was intended for public purposes, than to make an annual tax permanent for the sake of selling it, amounting to a nominal fifth of the value of the lands of these kingdoms. I therefore by no means feel so much objection to the commutation

tation suggested, as I did to the sale of the land-tax. "The latter was not a nuisance in its effects, compared to that of tythes: the payment of the land-tax does not affect the improvement of land, more than any other payment; but tythes are a burthen, which increase in proportion to the improvements of agriculture; and the proprietors of lands would much more willingly sell part of their estates, to relieve themselves from tythes, than from the land-tax."

It may be said that the money arising from the sale of tythes, when vested in the funds, would be at risk; and that if the funds should fail, there would be no security for the income of the clergy: the funds are surely much more secure than tythes, in case of any convulsion. No sort of property is likely to be so soon annihilated as tythe; because none is so obnoxious to the feelings and general interest of the husbandman and land owner. It would be the public interest, and the interest of a great mass
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of the people, to maintain the funds : it would be the interest only of that very small proportion of the people concerned in the collection of tythe, and not the interest of the public, to support that which is become the most odious tax, which would certainly go the first in case of any confusion, far less than such as would shake the funds : and then it should be recollected, that, in the possible event of such an extravagant case as the destruction of the funds, it would be incumbent on the State to supply the loss, and make an adequate provision for the clergy.

The author of "Observations on a Commutation of Tythes for Government Annuities," whom I have last quoted, ably supports his proposition : he first shews the necessity, observing, "that it is impossible to devise a greater source of mischief in the Christian world than the payment of tythes ; no other mode of paying the clergy would have produced a thousandth part of the evil, which this has produced

produced for more than a thousand years*," and he truly says, "he who will point out an equitable method of commuting tythes, will certainly deserve the thanks of his country." He then shews that there will be a present increase of church revenue resulting from the plan proposed; and answers the inquiry, "what increase of provision for the clergy there will be, 50 or 100 years hence, when money may have so decreased in value as to render even the present proposed increase of revenue inadequate to their support?" by saying, "a certain proportion of the increased annual value of every living, may be reserved as a fund for an augmentation hereafter; a small reservation, at compound interest, will amount

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* It was an early opinion, that the mode of providing for the church would by no means be productive of future good to the Christian religion.

Bishop Jewel, the great champion of the Church of England, has thought it worth while to quote from one of the old Catholic fathers, the following story relative to Constantine's conduct :

"When Constantine endowed the church with lands and possessions, it is said there was a voice of Angels heard in the air, saying, "Hodie venenum infunditur in ecclesiam;" "this day is poison poured into the church."

to a very large sum in 50 or 100 years ; and if 10*l.* per annum only, or one fifth of the increased value of every living, were reserved out of the income of the living, for 50 or 100 years to come, and employed at compound interest, the annual interest of the aggregate, when the compound interest should cease, would be a very large addition to the living, and probably much more than the decrease of the value of money at that period."

It appears to me that the greatest difficulty which will attend any plan that requires a sale of the tythes, will arise principally in respect to the manner of valuing them : if the price is to be estimated according to the suggestions of those who are to recommend themselves, by exerting the utmost of their ingenuity, in claiming every possible profit that could be derived from taking tythe in kind, that price will be prohibitory ; and if valued on an average of a few late years, it will act as a premium in favour of those who have exacted most, and against those whose moderation, acting on the
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most amiable principles, may not have taken half of the real value. The imposition of tythes was never intended to be carried so far as they have been ; and unless some mode can be imagined of valuing them liberally, according to the true spirit of the institution, we must despond in respect to doing that which can give satisfaction, or promoting the public good.

Some perhaps will prefer a commutation for a corn rent or a pound rate ; but if either are dependent on the actual crops or produce, it will not answer the purpose of removing the check to improvement. A modus or composition, although it should be high, if annually paid in money, and cannot be increased in consequence of improvements, would not check a more perfect cultivation of the land, more than any kind of rent would, and possibly might enforce a greater degree of exertion on the part of the farmer, to enable him to pay such rents*.

I must

* The late Mr. Justice Buller had prepared the sketch of a General Inclosure Bill, and another for the Commutation

I must observe, that the act for a commutation should be general, the same as is proposed for a general inclosure, and that whatever is directed should be obligatory on the tythe owner; for, if it should be merely optional, the little progress that ever would be made in a commutation, will be very slow indeed; Commissioners, part laity and part clergy, with a power of appeal, may be necessary. Any of the modes proposed, if the valuation is not carried too high, will be advantageous to the State; and even giving the large quantity of land that would be required in mortmain, however objectionable it may be, must be preferable to leaving tythes upon the present footing.

While on the subject of removing impediments to improvement, we should not forget some oppressive and disgusting remains of the

feudal mutation of tythe. Mr. Thomas Davies, of Longleat, has addressed to the Bath Agriculture Society several schemes for a commutation of tythes; but I cannot discover any material advantage in the plan for settling it according to the rise and fall of every commodity subject to tythes, so as to be a full yearly rent for each year's tythes.

feudal system, a commutation for which, or abolition on a fair compensation, cannot be objected to on any rational ground of argument. I should not propose to take away any rights that were necessary to the amusement of the owners of manors, or to take from them any advantage that could not be easily and fully compensated. It must be obvious to those who are acquainted with the subject, how much the state is prejudiced by certain disgusting remains of the worst kind of feudal rights, which are of little benefit to the lords of manors, and are oppressive and mischievous in a great degree. I do not wish to interfere with copyhold tenures, except as to enfranchisement in respect to timber, heriots, reliefs and fines at the will of the lord ; all which are in many respects highly objectionable, and discourage improvements.

It so happens that there is a large quantity of copyhold-land, not timber free, in those parts of England where the oak of the best quality, so necessary to our Navy, grows to the greatest size ;

size; such lands are immediately distinguishable by the passenger, from their nakedness, as no copyholder can be expected to suffer a tree to grow to encumber the land till it becomes timber for the benefit of the lord of the manor. It is much to be wished, therefore, that copyholds might be made timber-free for a valuable consideration, and that heriots and arbitrary fines might be compensated. They are highly vexatious; one checks improvement in the breed of cattle, and the other in respect to buildings and agriculture, in the same manner as the claim of tythes, or as in the case of lands in mortmain, as has been already described.

Nothing can be more odious than the custom of the bailiffs of the lords of manors, who however round the house of a person on his death-bed, and the moment that the family is in the greatest distress, rush in to seize the best cattle or best furniture; and if they do not find sufficient to satisfy them, which is often the case, seize a favourite dog. It is seriously advisable to part with such unworthy and unnecessary

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sary privileges for a valuable consideration, much better than wait till they are torn from us, with all the violence and horrors that have been experienced in France; and when seized, it will not be those alone that will be lost. A compensation in truth would be much better for the lords of the manors, because every means and every practice is exerted to deceive and to evade such galling oppression.

On this subject of tythes and feudal rights, we should take warning from what has happened in a neighbouring kingdom. Whatever might have been said in respect to the dignitaries of the church of France, there was nothing to be objected to the parochial clergy, who were principally known to the people, who had no views beyond their parish, and who were said to be in general, not only inoffensive, but exemplary in their conduct. It was not the dislike to the inferior clergy, which was comparatively small, nor an antipathy to monarchy, but the oppression of tythes and of feudal rights, which misled the mass of the people, in the first instance,

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to risk the most destructive revolution of which we have any account.

Several years ago, an immoderate raising of the tythes, established in Ireland those associations which have been known by the different appellations of white-boys, oak-boys, hearts of steel, and lastly united Irishmen. A direct warfare with tythes was not the leading principle in all of those associations, but it was adopted, intermixed with other supposed grievances, and acted on by all. Their depredations were extensive, and they exceeded in numbers, as well as in atrocity and system, ordinary banditti. They did not always assemble in large bodies, but they often committed great excesses in small parties by night.

It appears from the Report of the Committee of Secrecy, made by Lord Castlereagh to the House of Commons in Ireland, from the evidence on oath of the chief conspirators, that tythes were a principal cause of the dissatisfaction of the people of that country.

Dr.

Dr. M'Nevin, one of the conspirators examined on oath, was asked, whether an ecclesiastical establishment was intended by the new government in Ireland? he answered, No: that he "conceived that a revolution would involve the demolition of the church establishment, and of course a relief of the poor from tythes." Being asked, "do you think the mass of the people in the provinces of Leinster, Munster and Connaught, care the value of this pen, or the drop of ink which it contains, for parliamentary reform or catholic emancipation?" He answered, "I am sure they do not, but they wish much to be relieved from tythes."

Thomas Addis Emmett, Esq. was asked, "do you think the mass of the people care for catholic emancipation or parliamentary reform?" he answered, "I believe the mass of the people do not care a feather for catholic emancipation, neither did they care for parliamentary reform, till it was explained to them as leading to other objects which they looked to—principally the abolition of tythes."

In short, the resistance, depredations and malicious proceedings, of these several descriptions of insurgents had such an effect, that the tythe owners in very many parts of the kingdom, being defrauded and ill-treated in every respect, did not obtain half their dues, and were often glad to receive whatever they could get. The proctors, that is, the persons employed to collect the tythe, were buried up to the chin in the earth, wherever they could be seized, and were very frequently tortured, and often murdered. At length the constant irritation and mischiefs arising from such a mode of provision for the clergy, determined the government of Ireland to bring forward a measure for the commutation of tythe in that kingdom; and I hear it with pleasure, because I believe it would tend more than any other circumstance to appease the turbulent disposition of that country, and ultimately prevent much disorder, and many barbarous murders. In truth it is a measure absolutely necessary to the tranquil residence of the clergy, and to secure a regular income for them*.

Those

* There is another measure, altho' not of equal magnitude

Those who will seriously consider these points, can hardly doubt, I will not say, of the expediency, but of the necessity of another provision for the clergy of these kingdoms, which may not operate so unfavourably both for the church and for the country. A great proportion of that respectable body principally interested

in the cultivation of the wastes, and a commutation for tythes, and certain feudal claims, which has long been loudly called for, and is of great consequence. I mean the abolition of the various customary measures and weights, used in the different parts of the kingdom, and that grain should be sold by weight; as the maintenance of that which is liable to so much abuse, is clearly for the purpose of fraud and deceit, every man who has ever written on these subjects, has strongly represented how extremely desirable it is, to establish uniform and intelligible weights and measures. The delay of it is a curious proof how much we are under the dominion of those whose interest it is to cover their mode of doing business. The House of Commons has made some efforts to establish a better system, but has been always thwarted in its attempt. The most intelligible argument used by one of the greatest opposers of the measure in the committee, was, that if it passed into a law the most stupid ignorant fellow in England might set up for a corn dealer, just as well as the person who passed his whole life in acquiring skill and knowledge in that business.

rested in tythes, express a wish that some means could be devised of commuting them for some other species of income. Many lay impropiators agree in the same wish; the great mass of the country is so animated and interested against tythes, that it can hardly be doubted, that on the first opportunity or convulsion, they will be abolished by some extraordinary means. It is greatly to be wished, that whatever may be done should be in times of composure, by the Legislature, under no improper impression. Perhaps there never was a time more favourable than the present to bring forward this interesting question, when we have among the chiefs, particularly the heads of the church, so many eminently moderate and respectable persons, far different from those high churchmen, who, by their violent arbitrary principles, and injudicious conduct, promoted the overthrow of the established church in the reign of Charles the First. The times also are reasonable, and not likely to press that which would be unjust.

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The question, if delayed, will be brought forward in times less favourable ; and it should be considered, that there hardly exists a choice, whether it shall or shall not be stirred : a little sooner, or a little later, it will surely come forward ; and every friend to the public good, to the established church, to good order and tranquillity, must wish to see this question soon and satisfactorily settled.

There is no desire on my part, that those who are in possession of tythes, should not have a fair compensation ; my object is to shew how the claim of tythes arose, that they cannot be considered exactly on the same footing as other property ; that they were intended for public purposes, and therefore more particularly liable to the appointment and controul of a Legislature than private property ; that those to whom, on the dissolution of monasteries, or otherwise, they were granted, or by whom they were purchased, hold them such as they were ; and therefore, even if it had not been usual to oblige the owner to sacrifice, or to take a compensation for every other kind of possession, this sort is
 less

less entitled to exemption from regulation or controul, at the will of the State, for the advantage of the public, than any other ; and long possession affords no defence to those who, as I have already said, hold a property, as they themselves assert, under the tenure of *nullum tempus occurrit ecclesiæ*.

I may, perhaps, be answered on this subject, by admonitions against innovations. I shall reply in the words of Lord Bacon, " Time is the greatest innovator ; and if time of course alter things to the worse, and wisdom and counsel shall not alter them to the better, what shall be the end ? A froward retention of custom is as turbulent a thing as innovation ; and they that reverence too much old time, are but a scorn to the new." Every improvement in the constitution since the conquest was an innovation ; the establishment of a House of Commons, the appropriation of money to particular services granted for public purposes, the relinquishment of wards and liveries, and of the law that *nullum tempus occurrit regi*, were innovations ;

tions; but it is a modification that is now proposed, which may prevent an extravagant reformation. Those who, without consideration or candour, oppose any gradual change or improvement, are the most certain promoters of a convulsive reformation. They who repose on the notion that the kind of property I have alluded to, is as unexceptionable and as secure as any other, will be duped, as all Europe has been, in respect to the many extraordinary things that have lately happened, and from which surely we should take a lesson. The mass of the country will secretly wish, if not actively forward, the changes that are proposed, and these grievances may serve as a tool to those who otherwise may not be personally interested.

If, as an advocate for a measure which appears to me to be necessary for the welfare of the country, I should have expressed myself with such eagerness as to seem to be personally interested, I wish to remove that impression, by declaring that the greater part of my

my property is tythe free, that another part pays a fixed modus, and that no part pays tythe in kind. I will add, that I have been about 30 years what is deemed a large farmer; that I never should have tilled an acre of land where tythe is taken in kind; and that I never shall, so long as I possess any powers of calculation; and as to those hateful, hurtful, useless feudal rights that have been mentioned*, I possess several manors entitled to the claims in question.

I am sensible that I have not done justice to these interesting subjects: When I first entered on the third part, the difficulties and distress in which the empire was involved, were great and many; since that time the measure of calamity, both at home and abroad, seems nearly filled. At the moment that the very existence of the State is at risk, the mind turns itself imperfectly

* Which, at the same time that they check improvement, and are unpleasant and expensive in the mode of receipt, are not so advantageous to the lord of the manor as the common compensation of a few years purchase.

perfectly to matters of improvement, even such as those proposed ; but I had engaged to submit my opinion to the public on the means of future plenty.

My wish has been to point out the mischievous consequences of encouraging the people to decide, that there is no real deficiency of grain, nor grounds for high prices ; and that no extraordinary measures are necessary when an alarming scarcity is evident. I wished to shew that it is essentially necessary to economise bread corn ; and that the bringing into consumption a greater proportion of the grain, and the use of substitutes, would best obviate the distress arising from a deficiency of grain, and, by diminishing the demand, reduce extravagant prices much more effectually than trifling restrictions : That to point the indignation of the people against those who deal in corn, and are absolutely necessary to the subsistence of the country, aggravates the distress, promotes insurrection, and drives men of character and capital out of the trade. I have

shewn that, on an average of years, this island does not produce sufficient corn for its inhabitants; and also on an average of years to what an alarming degree we are become dependent on foreign states for our subsistence, and the enormous and ruinous payments which have been made to foreign countries for grain. I have likewise endeavoured to shew, that no modification of the corn laws could answer the exigency, and secure us from dearths and a dependence on foreign countries for our subsistence; and that if it were possible to continue to pay several millions yearly for corn, the surplus grain that we could obtain from all parts of the world would be insufficient to supply our wants, which have greatly increased on each scarcity, and to so great a degree, that even all the commercial shipping of Great Britain could not transport the quantity we might want. I have also endeavoured to shew, that the means of present relief and of future plenty must be the result of management, and of a measure completely within our power; and if we employ those means, they will be as efficient, as frequent

quent dearths must be certain if we neglect to take precautions; that to depend on importations is ruinously expensive, and the most uncertain resource.

I flatter myself it appears that the cultivation of the waste lands, and the encouragement of tillage, which can only be effected by exonerating it from unnecessary expences and discouragements, will both remove the great impediments to improvement, and lead us to a permanent state of prosperity in agriculture and commerce beyond any thing we have yet experienced*. It should be remembered, as all other

* The letters I have received since the year 1795 to the present time, on the deficiency of grain, and on the means of relief, are innumerable; not one of them has omitted to urge, in the strongest terms, that a commutation for tythe in kind, and the inclosure of the waste lands, are absolutely necessary, and the only sure means of increasing tillage and producing plenty. The same may be said of most of the essays and papers addressed to the Board of Agriculture. It may not be improper to observe, that Frederick the Great, of Prussia, by premiums and by all means promoted and enforced the abolition of commons, the separation of undivided property, and the cultivation of waste lands, for which

other countries which export grain are now free from tythe, that unless England and Ireland have the same advantage, and that greatest of discouragements is done away, it cannot be expected that our produce, tythed and taxed as it is, can go in competition with that of other countries to any foreign markets. The present bounty on export barely pays the expence of carriage to those markets.

The history of all countries tells us, that defective crops must at times be expected; but if we

which purpose he spared, from his great military and other expenditure, the sum of 6,000,000 sterling, in the space of twenty years.

The report on the waste lands, 1795, states, that there are above 22,000,000 acres uncultivated, above 14,000,000 of which are in Scotland, and nearly 8,000,000 in England and Wales; and that there are 3,000,000 acres fit for tillage, and 14,000,000 fit for upland pasture; according to the proportion of eight to fourteen there would be about 1,100,000 acres fit for tillage, and near 5,100,000 acres fit for upland pasture in England and Wales. I make this statement for the sake of observing that a very considerable part of the waste land fit for upland pasture in England might be used for tillage, if it should be wanted for that purpose, and the present discouragements should be removed.

we do not neglect the advantages in our power, we may raise sufficient to supply the greatest deficiency, by preparing for an exportation, that not only would bring into the country many millions, but also employ a large quantity of shipping. It may happen, that when adverse seasons occasion a defective crop, we might not be able to furnish very considerable supplies to other countries the same year, but we might have enough for ourselves, and save the immense sums we now pay to foreigners. We know that countries which only consider agriculture as the means of self subsistence, are in constant danger of dearths, and often suffer severely from them; and those who consider agriculture as an object of commerce have enjoyed a series of plenty, and had the advantage of not depending on the caprice but on the necessities of other countries. I should be happy, indeed, if I could convince others, as I am convinced myself, that half measures will be hurtful and dangerous; that not only plenty and the greatest advantages are to be obtained, but also the most

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alarming disadvantages and mischiefs may be averted by the cultivation of the waste lands, and some commutation for tythes and rights, which, to the disgrace of the civilized world, have for so many centuries injured and disturbed it.

Whitehall, March 20, 1801.

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